

tion adapted to the anticipated needs and presumed capacities of the functional divisions of the community: a visual-manual training for those who will be called upon to make shoes or pots or statues, and a musico-gymnastic education for those who will be called upon to make war and civic peace, with a higher conceptual level of training for those who will be called upon to make decisions and formulate policies. We may suggest that many a contemporary progressive educator would be charmed to provide for his young learners by doing a semester or two of association with those "sons of potters" whom Plato mentions as learning their father's art by observation and tentative experiment. Such an educator might also envy the assurance Plato has given (*Republic* 423 D) that each individual worker will be conscientiously assigned to the trade or craft for which his native aptitudes have shown him fit.

It may further be asked whether our own American educational scheme, for all its genuine pursuit of the ideal of equality, is not to a considerable degree, above the level of the elementary school, still fairly describable as limited in its practical aims, and certainly in its achievements, to a radically differential schedule: trade-schools for the "many," and college and graduate schools for the privileged few. We do not wish to equate the two unequals, but we believe it is not only a sobering exercise in actuality to view our own practice in the perspective of antiquity; it is also more likely that we shall do justice to the ancient world, if we can discover beneath the mask of its radical differences some of the features so familiar to us in our own.

We may venture a further suggestion as having, at least, an initial probability: modern technology has so completely destroyed the sort of handicraft industry to which the apprentice system was the natural concomitant, that those early years of life, which otherwise might have been largely allocated of necessity to the learning of a trade or craft, are now largely free for the broader program of the elementary school. Had this same condition confronted Plato, who dares to say that he might not have availed himself of it as an opportunity for "planting a crop of virtue" (to adapt a phrase from the *Laws*) in otherwise idle and unplanted minds? On the supposition here envisaged, then, Plato's failure to provide an education like that assigned to the guardians may be ascribed less to aristocratic prejudice than to the unavoidably cramping limitations of ancient craftsmanship. If the detractor feels that since it would not have been possible for Plato to give to each of his citizens the benefit of a broad and humane education up to the limit of his powers, nobody should have got one, it can be argued that Plato did what he believed best for the others, by providing them with enlightened public servants.

But how if, by a mingling of aristocratic scorn and neglect, Plato has explicitly deprived the many, not of education alone, but of such protection of their basic human rights as would accrue to them under the rule of law? It is Popper's belief that Plato has done just this, forbidding "his rulers to leg-

islate for them and their petty problems.”²⁸ The evidence for this statement apparently consists in a misreading of a *Republic* passage (roughly from 425 C to 427 A), in which Plato is merely relieving his rulers (and himself and his readers) of the advance provision of burdensome detailed legislation about harbor dues and actions for slander and the like, while explicitly assigning to his enlightened rulers the framing of such enactments as may be needed (*Republic* 425 D-E); adding that these will be few and simple, since, in a well governed city, many regulations designed to prevent fraud will be superfluous (*Republic* 427 A).

There is left the “argument from silence,” employed by both Popper and Fite, the assertion that Plato’s lordly scorn of the workers is audible in the extended treatment that he does not give them. “The workers . . . do not interest him at all, they are only human cattle whose sole function is to provide for the material needs of the ruling class . . . This is why our information about the lower classes is so scanty.”²⁹ Similarly, Fite, who has pictorialized his notion of Plato’s scornful neglect of the masses by likening their position in the panorama of the *Republic* to that of the common soldiers in Velasquez’ picture, “The Surrender at Breda”: they are merely there by way of a foil to the central figures on whom the painter has lavished his art, lay figures perfunctorily sketched and shading out into an obscure fringe of pack animals, outsiders, and slaves.³⁰

That Plato has devoted less space to discussion of the working class than Fite and Popper, counting pages in the interests of social justice, consider appropriate, is not necessarily to be explained in terms of aristocratic prejudice. Another reason which might occur to a nonpartisan reader is simply that Plato had something else in mind to say, a something which until recently, few qualified critics have regarded as either unimportant or unjustifiable. That “something” was a compound of ethics, educational theory, metaphysics, with other ingredients too numerous to enumerate here, and to the saying of it an extended account of the occupations and the training of the workers in his state was not, in Plato’s view, indispensable. We may remind the reader of a fact mentioned in our discussion of Plato’s attitude to the “banausic,”³¹ namely: that some time after the composition of the *Republic*, as evidenced particularly in the *Sophist* and *Politicus*,³² Plato had descended from the higher spheres of speculation and had immersed himself sufficiently in the study of the mechanic arts to be able to discourse, in a surprisingly well-informed manner,³³ of the technical process employed, for example, in the wool-worker’s and the angler’s occupations. He would, therefore, presumably

²⁸ Popper, p. 48.

²⁹ Popper, p. 48. For our discussion of the damaging implications of exploitation and scorn of the workers, see pp. 173ff.

³⁰ Fite, pp. 90-94.

³¹ See p. 237.

³² *Politicus* 279 C ff.; *Sophist* 220 B ff.

³³ Commented on admiringly by Wilamowitz, *Platon*, 1922, I, pp. 576-577; 1948, p. 455.

not have drawn back in disdain from discussion of the crafts and professions, needed in his city, had the design of his book required it. If it still seems inexcusable to the critic of Plato that he should have been mainly concerned with a type and level of education and of theoretic pursuits open and applicable only to the leisured and intellectual few, we are again driven to take shelter in the obvious: we will leave it to a jury of contemporary "common men" to decide whether the present writing and the writings that provoked it are not all, by the same measure, guilty of the same offense. Such benefits as may accrue to the ordinary citizen from our discussion will be indirect; they will reach him, if at all, after a long interval during which the social percolator has had time to do its job.

We may now for awhile shake free from the company and atmosphere of the detractors and turn to a project of our own, gathering for inspection in the hope of setting the whole matter of Plato's aristocratic prejudices in a fairer light a reasonable number of passages in which such prejudice is involved, either as exemplified or as opposed. The material can be arranged under three heads, of which the first is scorn of the "many" or of the "multitude."

There is scarcely a Platonic writing, from the *Apology* to the *Laws*, in which one could not find, verbally or conceptually, the contrast between "knowledge or true opinion" and "the beliefs of the many." The recurrence of this antithesis should not, however, be permitted to conceal from view a certain diversity in the connotation of its second member; in the instances to be adduced we shall ask the reader to note this variety.

In the *Apology*, reporting his search for a man wiser than himself, Socrates comes at last to question the artisans. He finds them wiser, indeed, than those more highly esteemed, in that they are wise in their own crafts; yet in their mistaken supposition that their wisdom extends to other "matters of highest import," they too fall into ignorance, and their claim to wisdom fails (22 D-E). Later, in justifying his abstention from political life, he asserts that no just man, struggling against the many unjust and lawless acts that are done in cities "by you [Athenians] or any other multitude" could long survive (31 E-32 A).

Crito, in the dialogue of that name, protests Socrates' refusal to break prison, urging, as a secondary reason, that "many people" will suspect him, Crito, of having withheld the necessary bribes, out of avarice or fear. "The many," he avers, "will not believe that you were unwilling to escape" (44 C). Socrates, replying, contrasts the many with the most reasonable or best, and by a brief induction (47 A f.) proves that it is only the expert and never the many whose praise or blame are to be taken seriously. True, the many have the power to take our lives, but this, in comparison with our justice, which they cannot take, is a trivial matter (48 A-B). Further, the many imagine

that for an injured man to return an injury is just, a belief which, Socrates declares, all but a few will always continue to hold, but to which he and Crito will never assent (49 D-E).

In the *Gorgias*, Socrates, maintaining against Polus the unhappiness of the unjust tyrant, agrees with him that this is not the view of "the Athenians and the Strangers" (that is, of the whole of Athens), and that they and all of their political leaders with them will testify in favor of Polus' view; but questions of philosophy, of ultimate right and wrong, are not to be solved by these forensic methods (472 A-B). On the same principle, a little later, Socrates again refuses to accept the verdict of numbers: he is "not a politician," he says; he does not take the vote of the many as to the truth of his words. Instead, he offers to submit his case to the judgment of one respondent, Polus, whom he will cross-examine; "for I think that both you and the rest of mankind really believe that it is worse to do wrong than to suffer it" (473 E-474 B). In a later section of the dialogue, Socrates makes use of "the many" in order to lead the immoralist Callicles, believer in the natural right of the stronger, into a contradiction: The many, collectively taken, it has been admitted, are by nature stronger than the few; the many also hold that "justice is equality and that doing injustice is more disgraceful than to suffer it"; it follows that the truth of these two propositions can claim the sanction of nature, and not of convention only (488 E-499 A).³⁴

"The many" appear in the *Republic* in a great variety of roles. "The many" mistakenly suppose that individual sophists, as educators of the young, are capable of doing any damage worth speaking of, compared to the "great sophist"—who is indeed himself "the many" gathered in assemblies and courtrooms, whose approvals and dissents, cheers and boos, impose their erroneous standards upon the impressionable youth. "The many" may indeed be likened to a "great beast," whose moods and appetites it is the mistaken business of the individual sophists to make into the subject matter of their instruction (492 A-493 E). With less of picturesqueness but with greater sympathy, we are told, however, that though forever incapable of philosophy (493 E-494 A), the multitude will be capable of admiring and loving philosophers, when once these are no longer degenerate pretenders but veritable sons of light (499 E-500 A). The many, in their pursuit of sensual pleasures, appear in a later book, in wanton aspect: "without experience of wisdom and virtue . . . bent over their tables they feed like cattle, . . . for very greed kicking and butting each other with iron horns and hooves" (586 A-B).

Some concluding examples may be drawn from the *Laws*. The many suppose that the aim of music is simply to give pleasure to any man, be he bad or good (655 C-D, 658 E, 700 E); when they were no longer strictly controlled, at Athens the many set themselves up as judges in the theatre, and

³⁴ The relation of this conclusion to theory will claim our attention on later Plato's own serious ethical and political pages, 416 and 422-423.

thus engendered a corruption in taste, which in turn sapped the foundations of the state, and introduced a lawless democracy (700-701). The many have no conception of the natural order of human goods (661 A, 742 E); they hold mistaken opinions about the virtues (662-63). They believe that there are occasions when the adulteration of commodities is a justifiable practice (916 E), and entertain the perverse notion that the study of astronomy is the road to atheism (967 A). Yet Plato will still insist that no man does wrong willingly (860 D-E); and he tells us again, as in the *Republic*, that though themselves not virtuous, nay even sometimes when they are quite evil men, the many can yet distinguish the virtuous man from the wicked (950 B-C).

In sum, we see that occasionally "the many" are simply most-people-within-a-certain-limited-group; in the first passage cited from the *Crito*, they are simply most of those whose good opinion Crito desires to retain. Another frequent use is the one in which we are particularly interested in this chapter: the common people, as distinct from the well-to-do or the educated — more specifically, the *dêmos* of Athens, gathered in its assemblies and courts. "The many" in this sense are spoken of as dangerous and lawless, and as believers in the advantages of power (in the *Gorgias* passage) and in false values generally, from the first dialogue to the last. But this "prejudiced" or "political" meaning blends insensibly into a third use, which we may call the "philosophical": "the many" as the antithesis of "the few who know" or even of "the one who knows." In this sense, also, the concept spans the entire series of the dialogues; with the exception of the few wise, it includes all of mankind, rich and poor, noble and commoner alike. And here we find both Socrates³⁵ and Plato displaying a strange union of intolerance and sympathy. "The many" will always be mistaken about the true good (*Crito*). Yet "no man does wrong willingly"; in every man, rightly questioned, will be found true wisdom; and "the many" can and will judge rightly of virtuous men, if virtuous men are shown them. To save "the many" from their folly becomes at once the end despaired of by both Socrates and Plato, and the chief end of their lives, to which their own achievement of justice would also contribute. It would be most uncritical to pass over unnoticed Plato's animus against the political party of "the many," Athenian democracy. But it is more uncritical, and unfair as well, to ascribe to this motive all Plato's condemnation of human error and wickedness, and to see in his desire to help the common man only a desire to put him securely in his despised and exploited place in the social frame.

We must now spread our inductive net a second time, for the catching of Plato's utterances expressing his scorn or appreciation of craftsmen or wage workers; and here, to do justice to Greek usage, we must note that the term

³⁵ We here assume the preponderantly Socratic character of the *Apology* and *Crito*; cf. p. 632. For the "philosophical many," see also n. 228, pp. 340-341.

"craftsman" is employed in a sense much wider than we in the modern world would give it: a sophist, for example, falls within its ambit. Our labor here will be much lightened by the results reached in our examination of Plato's attitude toward the "banausic." But for the greater security of building on a wider base, we wish to add a few supplementary examples.

A blush rises to the cheek of the aristocratic young Hippocrates in Plato's *Protagoras* (312 A) when he is asked by Socrates whether it is in his mind to become a professional sophist. In the *Republic* (434 A-B), we are not surprised to hear that cobblers may interchange crafts and tools with carpenters with less injury to the state than would result from the intrusion of an artisan-by-nature upon the office of a soldier, or of the latter upon the function of supreme guardian.

There is a passage in the *Theaetetus* (175 B-176 A) with which we shall presently be concerned again, in which Socrates employs some relevant metaphors: the petty skill of the courtroom lawyer is a mere trick of "rolling up a pack," "sweetening a sauce or a fawning speech": lacking the ability of the true philosopher to discourse about the chief ends of life in the interests of truth alone, he cannot "drape his cloak" like a freeman, or hymn aright the life of men loved by gods. There is an unmistakable touch of social haughtiness in all this; perhaps, as often happens in imaginative writing, the figure has claimed more attention than its due. In any case the central meaning of the passage concerns a distinction between two types of mentality which, it is arguable, are only accidentally relevant to the social distinctions here employed for their vivid dramatic depiction.

The *Laws*, as ever, will provide a court of highest instance on Plato's balanced conclusions on the proper attitude to craftsmen. Prejudice we still find; pilots, captains, and rowers, are, as in the *Republic*, a motley crowd, "not wholly respectable" (707 B); even the painter's art is one which a man will be just as well off for never having seriously considered (769 B). Citizens are completely banned from engaging in any technical craft (846 D, 919 D-E), from any manufacturing, mercantile, or other profit-making enterprises, except farming, and here only vicariously — the actual work is to be done by other hands; and the citizens' wealth is not to exceed a certain measure (715 A).³⁶ There is, however, a curious passage (919 B ff.), in which, with entire

seriousness, Plato speaks with warm and sympathetic approval of retail trade as naturally good; along with the services of the laborer and the innkeeper, it comes into being to supply the satisfaction of human needs. He adds a daring suggestion, appropriately guarded: "if the best men should be compelled for a season to keep inns or peddle or follow any such trade," which "Heaven forbid!" — then we should see these callings "enjoying the honors that we give to mothers and to nurses." But Plato recalls regretfully his old conviction: it is the weakness of all but a few select natures to be unable to withstand the clamorous voice of gain. The citizens of the model city (who are to be responsible for its government) must not be subjected to such moral risk. No citizen, on pain of being judged to be "sullyng his paternal hearth"³⁷ shall engage in trade. These tasks, since they are necessary, must be carried on, but to the least extent possible, and by those (the resident aliens) who would least damage the state were they to become corrupt, and finally, under careful supervision. And Plato adds to his legislation a price-fixing law designed to guarantee a fair profit to the traders, for the express purpose of guarding their moral safety; for "the Law-wardens must bear in mind that they are guardians not only of those who, being well-trained both by birth and nurture, are easy to guard from lawless and evil ways, but also of those who are otherwise, and who follow pursuits which greatly tend to urge them on the road to vice; and these they must guard the more."³⁸ Immediately after this, Plato pays equal honor to the artisans, coupling them with soldiers: "Sacred to Hephaestus and Athena is the class of the craftsmen who have furnished our life with the arts, and to Ares and Athena belong those who safeguard the products of these craftsmen by other defensive arts"; by their callings, "these all continually serve both the country and the people." Plato enacts that each shall be justly rewarded by the citizens of his state, the artisan with fair payment for his work, the soldier with "those honors which are the soldier's wages."³⁹ Remembering the high status of the soldier in the *Republic* (and that in the *Laws*, too, the soldier's task is held fit for the citizens themselves), we can recognize the high respect for the artisan which this combined treatment implies.

In fine, Plato's attitude to the craftsman exemplifies again that tempering of prejudice with principle of which we have spoken; and even in the realm of principle, it cannot easily be brought to a brief formulation, involving as it does so much of his whole theory of man and of the good society. To the end of his days, particularly in his *obiter dicta* and in his metaphorical passages, Plato drops into the scorn-laden language so prevalent among all privileged classes of his day, as we have seen him do, also, in relation to slaves and women; this is an indication of prejudice, aristocratic prejudice, if the de-

³⁷ *Laws* 919 E, trans. Bury, Loeb Library.

³⁸ *Laws* 920 A-C, trans. Bury, Loeb Library.

³⁹ *Laws* 920 D-922 A, trans. Bury, Loeb Library.

tractor likes, but, as we have seen, it was neither Plato's personal invention, nor merely a tradition in the Plato family

On the other hand, from early till late, this same man showed himself aware of the value and dignity of the crafts in the *Apology*, he reports the belief of Socrates that workmen, as workmen (but not as supposing themselves to know of higher matters) are to be honored,⁴⁰ in the *Republic*, they are to be the friends and the only less talented brothers of the guardians,⁴¹ in the *Laws*, the arts are sacred and the trades are naturally good, the artisans serve the country in their way as truly as do the soldiers. Yet a wide range of principles prevent Plato from admitting the worker to full participation in the highest human excellence. These include the beliefs, earlier mentioned, that soul and its attendance are of higher worth than body, that men capable of complete virtue are rare, and that competence in any art requires specialization, added to these is the belief in the specific damage and danger to body and soul brought by the crafts themselves on those who practice them. Plato pities and wishes to protect those who must be exposed to these ill effects. He does not, when he looks the problem full in the face, scorn the worker or the work. But when it is proposed that working men shall participate in government — to him the crucial and the crowning art, to which all others are subservient — then the workman merges with the *dēmos*, the many in the political sense, and not from prejudice, but from principle, Plato will resolutely bar his entry.

Let us turn the pages of the dialogues once again, this time looking for reflections of Plato's feelings about noble birth and the prestige accruing to a man through membership in a distinguished family, here, too, we shall include ancestral wealth. Perhaps it will be simplest to set out passages under the captions of approval or disapproval, reserving, as before, questions of interpretation to a final paragraph of appraisal.

The Platonic Socrates knows how to pay little compliments to the young men with whom he talks, as he does to Lysis and Menexenus (*Lysis* 207 B-C), to whom he delicately imputes beauty and noble birth by eliciting from them the admission that it is a matter of dispute between them which of them possesses these qualities to the higher degree. Similarly, by way of illustrating the importance of determining the essential nature of a thing before disputing about its qualities, he playfully tells Meno that it is impossible for one who is utterly ignorant of who Meno is, to know whether Meno is handsome, wealthy, and well born, or, he mischievously adds, knowing the young man's vanity, the reverse of these (*Meno* 71 B).

Broader praise, with no admixture of irony, is bestowed upon the family to which Charmides and Critias (and as we remember, Plato himself) be-

⁴⁰ See p. 235 above

⁴¹ See pp. 170, 212, 213 above

longed. The young Charmides, in the dialogue so named, is pointed out to Socrates by Critias, and Socrates, having exclaimed over his beauty, asks whether he is also noble in soul, adding, "I should think, Critias, he ought to be, since he is of your house." Critias vouches for this, and adds that Charmides is also a poet; "That, my dear Critias," Socrates replies, 'is a gift which your family has had a long while back through your kinship with Solon.' A little further on, Critias praises Charmides as preëminent in all respects, but principally in temperance, and Socrates says to Charmides that this was only to be expected; "for I do not suppose there is any one else here who could readily point to a case of any two Athenian houses uniting together which would be likely to produce handsomer or nobler offspring than those from which you are sprung." And Socrates goes on to mention the fame for beauty and virtue and all else that is called fortunate, on both sides of the family, concluding with praises of Charmides' own beauty, and the exclamation, "But if your nature is really rich in temperance and those other things, as our friend here says, blessed is the son, dear Charmides, that your mother has borne in you!"⁴² Beside this we may put the sincere compliment paid by Socrates in the *Republic* to Plato's brothers, Glaucon and Adeimantus, who, having just concluded their restatement of Thrasymachus' case in praise of injustice, now urge Socrates to refute their arguments: "It was excellently spoken of you, . . . in the beginning of the elegy which the admirer of Glaucon wrote when you distinguished yourselves in the battle of Megara — 'Sons of Ariston, whose race from a glorious sire is godlike.' This, my friends, I think, was well said. For there must indeed be a touch of the godlike in your disposition if you are not convinced that injustice is preferable to justice though you can plead its case in such a fashion."⁴³

In a later dialogue (*Timæus* 20 A), the philosopher Timæus is commended as one well fitted to discourse of statecraft and the noble conduct of war, possessing as he does wealth and birth, as well as political experience and philosophic training. Combined with the compliment, we have perhaps in this passage Plato's recognition of the favorable differential entailed by exposure to those influences for moral and intellectual development which in Plato's society, as still to a large degree in our own, accrued to those who possessed wealth, and to those whom the Greeks called "well-born." There was thus what we may call an incidental relation between birth and wealth and educational and cultural advantages, which commended the former.

As to wealth, if we may neglect for the moment its frequent concomitant, birth, Plato makes no objection to it as such; his exhortations are reserved for it in process of being unscrupulously acquired or intemperately consumed. He includes it in his "table of goods," as we shall presently see, but at the

⁴² *Charmides* 154 D-155 A, 157 D-158 B, trans. Lamb, Loeb Library.

⁴³ *Republic* 368 A, trans. Shorey, Loeb Library.

bottom of the list, and as strictly subordinate to moral control. In the *Phaedrus* (279 C), he reports or invents a little prayer in which Socrates prays that he may think wisdom true wealth, and that he may possess "as much gold as only the temperate man can support and manage." As has been well remarked, "Socrates neither prays for wealth with the worldling, nor deprecates it with the Cynic,"⁴⁴ but values it in its place. Marxists will scoff and socialists will imagine a vain thing; nevertheless there is, we submit, something more than snobbism residing in Plato's principle.

Being "well-born" has thus far appeared as simple matter for congratulation, but *audi alteram partem*. The *Gorgias* is strewn with passages breathing contempt for wealth, power, and the distinction conferred by even the highest political offices in the Athenian state. Until near the end, there has been no explicit depreciation of the claims of noble birth, but in the myth with which the dialogue closes, all the just-mentioned vaunted measures of value, together with that of birth, are combined and collectively condemned in ringing terms. In older times, as Socrates has heard and takes for true, it was the custom of the gods to assign men to their future punishments or rewards after a trial held on earth, on the last day of a man's life. Frequent miscarriages of justice occurred, and complaint was referred to Zeus, who said: "The cases are now indeed judged ill; and it is because they who are on trial are tried in their clothing, for they are tried alive. Now many . . . who have wicked souls are clad in fair bodies and ancestry and wealth, and at their judgement appear many witnesses to testify that their lives have been just." Zeus prescribes that henceforth they must be "'stripped bare of all these things before they are tried; for they must stand their trial dead . . . bereft of kin and having left behind on earth all that fine array, to the end that the judgement may be just.'" ⁴⁵

We come again to the passage in the *Theaetetus* from which we drew the pair of contrasting pictures of the lawyer and the philosopher just above. The philosopher, after furnishing matter for amusement to the hard-headed realists, *habitués* of the courts, by his general ineptitude in such affairs, has his turn to be amused when he listens to the empty speeches and boasting of the others.

When he hears a panegyric of a despot or a king he fancies he is listening to the praises of some herdsman — a swineherd, a shepherd, or a neatherd, for instance — who gets much milk from his beasts; but he thinks that the ruler tends and milks a more perverse and treacherous creature than the herdsmen, and that he must grow coarse and uncivilized, no less than they, for he has no leisure and lives surrounded by a wall, as the herdsmen live in their mountain pens. And when he hears that someone is amazingly rich, because he owns ten thousand acres of land or more, to him, accustomed as he is to think of the whole earth, this seems very little. And when people sing the praises of lineage and say someone is of noble birth, because he can show seven wealthy ancestors, he thinks

⁴⁴ W. H. Thompson, in his note *ad loc.*, to his edition of the *Phaedrus*, 1868.

⁴⁵ *Gorgias* 523 C-E, trans. Lamb, Loeb Library.

that such praises betray an altogether dull and narrow vision on the part of those who utter them; because of lack of education they cannot keep their eyes fixed upon the whole and are unable to calculate that every man has had countless thousands of ancestors and progenitors, among whom have been in any instance rich and poor, kings and slaves, barbarians and Greeks. And when people pride themselves on a list of twenty-five ancestors and trace their pedigree back to Heracles, the son of Amphitryon, the pettiness of their ideas seems absurd to him; he laughs at them because they cannot free their silly minds of vanity by calculating that Amphitryon's twenty-fifth ancestor was such as fortune happened to make him, and the fiftieth for that matter. In all these cases the philosopher is derided by the common herd, partly because he seems to be contemptuous, partly because he is ignorant of common things and is always in perplexity."⁴⁶

The same issues recur, involved in the problem of constructing the best practicable city of the *Laws*. No reader of that book can well have forgotten its repeated insistence on the primacy of moral intelligence as the unique prerequisite to honor in that austere state. Government will be entrusted, and the name of "wise" be given, not to those of agile intellect, "trained in all accomplishments," who, however, lack the love of "what they perceive to be noble and good"; but rather to "those whose mental condition is the reverse of this . . . even if—as the saying goes—"they spell not neither do they swim."⁴⁷ There is a small shock of surprise awaiting us, in what seems a manifest contradiction, on the following page: the tabulation therein offered (690 A) of the various "claims to rule" includes that of the "well-born," which, by the manner of its presentation, seems to be accorded the warrant of a just claim. But we soon observe that also included is the claim of the stronger, a claim that Plato proceeds at once to treat with ironic ridicule, and to contrast, in its supposed naturalness, with the veritable naturalness of the rule of law, without force, over willing subjects, which is here equated to the rule of the wise over the ignorant. When, in the following book, Plato returns to the tabulation of the "claims," it is to call attention to the relation of logical conflict between them, and above all to declare with unequivocal clarity that, in his state, "we shall assign office to a man not because he is wealthy, nor because he possesses any other quality of the kind—such as strength or size or birth; but . . . to that man who is most obedient to the laws."⁴⁸

If now we find Plato in fact according some differential advantages in political representation to his wealthier citizens,⁴⁹ it must be remarked that these

⁴⁶ *Theaetetus* 174 D–175 B, trans. Fowler, Loeb Library. Popper in his revised edition, p. 566, takes note for the first time of this passage, acknowledging that it stands "in flagrant contrast" to his own account of Plato's attitude, which nevertheless he does not retract. See our Appendix VII, p. 603.

A pithy sentence reinforcing Plato's point is at *Theaetetus* 173 D: "As to who in the city is well born or ill born, . . . he [the true philosopher] knows even less of that than he does of the proverbial

pitcher-fulls that make up the sea."

⁴⁷ *Laws* 689 B–D, trans. Bury, Loeb Library.

⁴⁸ *Laws* 715 B–C, trans. Bury.

⁴⁹ *Laws* 744 B–C, 757 A–E.—Careful reading of 757 will show Plato at pains to distinguish three modes of distributing offices, the inequality based on wealth, the simple arithmetical equality of the lot, and the proportionate equality of the "judgment of Zeus," based on virtue and cultivation (*paideia*). The third is his aim, but

are reluctant concessions to human imperfection, justified only on practical, prudential grounds. Plato's own preference is for a thoroughgoing equality of possessions (744 B-C). His rating of wealth in the hierarchy of human goods is stated in several places in the *Laws*,⁵⁰ but with especial neatness as follows: "It shall be laid down that the goods of the soul are highest in honour and come first, provided that the soul possesses temperance; second come the good and fair things of the body; and third the so-called goods of substance and property."⁵¹

But our books are not yet balanced. There are three more entries, all approvals of good "birth," though as we shall see with referents importantly different from that which the *Theaetetus* has condemned. There is, to begin with, a sense in which it is true to say that Plato places a very high value upon birth, using it as a directive principle for organizing, preserving, and even improving, his reformed communities of the *Republic* and the *Laws*. This is birth in the biological, or, better, the eugenical meaning of the word. How far Plato had gone toward an organized theory of human genetics is a topic reserved for later pages.⁵² In the present context we need only note that Plato clearly distinguished between heredity and "noble birth."

A second ground upon which Plato can be shown to have approved "good birth," this time in the sense of good family environment, is the advantage it provides of growing up in a household where approvable ideals are honored as they were exemplified in the ancestors, put into practice by the living adult members, and inculcated in the young. Such a family, if it had also enjoyed public recognition, could both confer the name of "well-born" in the popular sense, and constitute the matrix for favorable moral development. We cannot offer complete documentation in the form of a passage specifically asserting the principle, but we may point to Plato's shrewd eye for the importance of the *ethos* of a family (though to his mind its influence was rarely strong enough to withstand the pressure of false ideals in the community) on the developing characters of its scions, shown in the passage in the *Republic*, where the misguided youth who is to become the "timocratic" man, is described as responding still to the restraining influence of his virtuous and philosophic

even so good a thing must be employed in moderation, if discord is to be avoided. Thus it must be tempered with the other two. Popper's statements (pp. 534-535, 548-549) that Plato "much preferred" plutocracy, and that he "demands" that political office shall depend in part on wealth, birth, height, and comeliness, are most unjust. "Concedes partially and reluctantly" would be the proper expression. As to Popper's further remarks about Plato's "conquering war horde" morality, shown in his believing, as Popper implies he does, that bodily

strength entitles a man to greater influence — this is first to overlook the obvious advantages of family connections, size, and good looks when it comes to success in an election in any age, and the particular sensitivity of the Greeks in general to bodily beauty; it is also to ascribe to Plato approval of what he merely recognizes regretfully (cf. 690 B, cited just above) as influential.

⁵⁰ E.g., 631 B-D, 831 C-D, 727 E-728 A.

⁵¹ *Laws* 697 B, trans. Bury, Loeb Library.

⁵² See below, pp. 537ff.

father, who is "watering and fostering the growth of the rational principle in his soul";⁵³ this influence, however, is unable wholly to protect the son from the false values of his vain mother and the house slaves, and of the citizens of the ill-governed city which is their home (550 A-B). A few pages later we hear of the similar situation of the young son of the "oligarchic" man, who, tempted by base companions, is admonished by his father and his other kinsmen; sometimes such a youth is thus reformed and restored to the (relative) virtue in which he was reared (560 A). From these and other passages in which Plato recognizes the all-importance for growth in virtue, of the values which are held up to the young by those with whom they are associated, it seems a fair corollary to assert that Plato valued the sort of moral and cultural environment in the home, under which a Theaetetus, a Polemarachus, or he himself had grown up, as more frequently promotive of the good life of virtue and reason, than any other this side of Utopia.

A third sense in which Plato valued high birth is closely related both to Plato's piety for those of kindred blood, and to his admiration for the virtuous life, two interests never far from the center of Plato's affections. In the most serious portion of the often satirical and deliberately rhetorical *Menexenus*, the notion of pride of ancestry confronts us in a different form. It is now the heritage of honor which it is the duty of a descendant to preserve, to enhance, and to pass on. Plato imagines the dead whose obsequies he celebrates as addressing their descendants, bidding them strive to outdo their fathers in virtue. You will win this victory over us, they say, "if ye are careful . . . not to trade upon the glory of your ancestors nor yet to squander it, believing that for a man who holds himself of some account there is nothing more shameful than to find himself held in honor not for his own sake but because of the glory of his ancestors. In the honors which belong to their parents, the children truly possess a noble and splendid treasure; but to use up one's treasure, whether of wealth or of honour, and bequeath none to one's children, is the base and unmanly act of one who lacks all wealth and distinctions of his own."⁵⁴

Now it would be little short of an affront to a reader's intelligence to spell out for his benefit the significance, for an estimate of Plato as a man, of what he himself has so clearly and magnificently said of aristocratic birth. We have noted the small contradictions, but for the rest we may let Plato's own explanations stand. That they are sufficient to justify the rewriting of some passages in Fite's and Popper's books should be clear. In the case of the "many" and of the workman, Plato was held back from admitting them to full excellence by principles which, while we can respect the integrity of their application, we cannot accept; in the case of nobility of birth, however,

⁵³ *Republic* 550 A, trans. Shorey, Loeb Library.

⁵⁴ *Menexenus* 274 A-B, trans. Bury, Loeb Library.

light — and we are not without title so to read them — the allusions to the splendor of the family past no longer appear as instances of Plato's vainglory. They become, as it were, scenes in a tragedy of understatement, in which the pity of the latter end is reënforced by contrast with the bright promise of Act One. Herein Plato was no more honoring the dishonorable deeds of Critias and Charmides, than he was in the *Symposium* congratulating Alcibiades upon his subsequent iniquities. In both cases, he was showing Socrates as achieving what was humanly possible, in the circumstances, toward preventing the disaster that engulfed all three blindlings in the later years.

A word will serve to acknowledge the essential truth of Crossman's assertion that Plato was by association and by temperament debarred from understanding the common man, whom Crossman equates roughly with the working classes of Plato's *Republic*. Crossman does not censure Plato for observing the degradation and ignorance of the common man — Crossman feels himself constrained to acknowledge that, through the conditions of an unequal society, the common man even in the modern world has often been plunged into such degradation. He blames him, rather, for failing to understand the potential goodness and intelligence lurking in the mind and heart of the ordinary citizen, and entitling him, despite all appearances, to be given, in continually growing measure, full and equal rights of participation in the management of the human enterprise. It cannot be denied that Crossman's charge is deserved, — that, for Plato, the ordinary run of men in an ordinary community are what is left of human nature when the light of philosophy has been removed, or rather when this light is darkened by ignorance within. The unhappy consequences for his social theory of this defective insight we must consider in due course. One may ascribe it, in part, to the social conditions and political crises of his time, and in part, with Crossman, to a certain aesthetically and intellectually grounded aloofness of Plato's personality. One may even, in diametrical denial of Crossman and Popper alike, mention among the contributing causes one Socrates: for had not Socrates turned him from the unexamined opinions of the "many" to the search for the one expert, the one who knows? And for the acquiring of this knowledge, a lifetime was not too long. The intellectual few alone could companion Plato in his search, and from their association Plato could not come to know the worth and potentialities of the actual common man. In consequence of this ignorance, the principles which we have described as standing between Plato and the extension of political rights to workmen, went uncorrected by counter-principles which, equally Platonic, might have served to alter much that we find unacceptable in his

testifies in his *Symposium* to the fact of this relationship as it concerned Charmides, who is there depicted as an agreeable and unassuming companion, accepted by Socrates on equal terms of intimacy with Antis-

thenes. (It is to be remembered that Popper makes much of the closeness of the friendship between Socrates and Antisthenes.) Similarly in the *Memorabilia* Socrates likes and approves of Charmides.

social arrangements, particularly those of the *Republic*. For Plato has given us also the principle that participation in the formation of policies must be proportional to moral understanding. Whoever, then, could have shown Plato that he was materially mistaken in having imposed too low a ceiling on the intellectual and moral potential of the common man, would have had Platonic consent and gratitude for altering Plato's conclusions in this matter.

Plato and Athens

No responsible attempt to measure the integrity of Plato's criticism of contemporary Athenian democracy and his relation to the political movements of his day is possible without reference to the logically prior standard of an "objective" estimate of the political and cultural pattern of the Athens in which he lived. All the detractors, recognizing this, have, each in his own characteristic way, given clear indications of the standard employed.

For Fite the Athenian culture of the fifth century was a brilliant achievement, particularly as the expression of intellectual enlightenment, of which Plato himself is cited as an example. But Athenian glory was marred by certain moral deficiencies.⁵⁸ The Athenian bid for supremacy had converted the cities of the erstwhile league into subjects of an empire. The value of Athenian democracy was limited by the restrictions upon admission to citizenship and the jealous guarding of rights and privileges which gave it something of the character of "a gentleman's club"⁵⁹ and produced "a leisure class of gentlemen-rulers, supported by the dole."⁶⁰ The clash of "democratic" and "oligarchic" party interest which constituted Athenian politics was a dangerous and often utterly unscrupulous game, played out with a calculating self-interest on both sides. The advantage of the oligarchic party, which lay in immunity from the heavy burden of taxation and from that destruction of agriculture which war and imperial adventure imposed primarily upon them, was pursued by ruthless violence and even, we may suspect, by treachery; the advantage of the politically-conscious, city-dwelling *demos* lay in war and the profits of empire, upon which their pay depended. But rising above the battle, and measuring the spirit of Greek democracy at its greatest height, stands the Funeral Oration of Pericles,⁶¹ "a noble picture . . . of an enlightened civilization, and one of the finest of all time."⁶² This picture Fite asks us to consider in significant juxtaposition, or opposition, to the narrow oppressions of Plato's *Republic*.

Crossman's Athens is recognizably the same city that Fite describes,⁶³ but more incurably torn by internal strife, and not so much enlightened as

⁵⁸ Fite, Chapter VI, pp. 113-127.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 148-152.

⁶² Fite, p. 150.

⁶³ Crossman: for the Athenian empire,

pp. 29-31; for the policy of imperial expansion, pp. 32-33; for the excesses of the democrats, p. 33; for the ruthless class war, pp. 34-35; for the defects inherent in Periclean democracy, pp. 35-46.

morally confused and bewildered by the rapid succession of dissolving life views which had replaced the older morality of custom. The new rationalism had brought skepticism in its train, leading to a cynical nihilism and ruthless power politics against which the Socratic appeal to Reason and the authority of virtue were unable to prevail.⁶⁴ Indeed, Crossman is prepared to believe that for all his nobility of aim, Socrates had on balance simply amplified the confusion, and his "effects on Athenian life had" — in the light of their political consequences — "been disastrous."⁶⁵ To carry forward the unfinished business of his dead master, first applying the Socratic dialectic to the positive definition of the virtues, and then founding upon them the just political order which Socrates had demanded, was the self-imposed task of Plato.⁶⁶

From this report on Plato's Athens as viewed by our two critics, one gathers that it would have been very possible for a citizen of good sense and good will to have urged fundamental changes in its constitution looking to the removal of the serious evils and dangers with which it was beset, in short, to have maintained a position comparable in its general features to that which Plato was led to maintain. To this extent, then, we have been treated to a partial justification of Plato. But for this indulgence the third critic, Popper, has made full compensation. So thoroughgoing is the contrast that Popper has set up between the spell of Plato and the spirit of democratic Athens, that it includes, along with its own abundance, whatever of reproach, direct or implied, was conveyed in Fite's account. In consequence, we may omit the task of answering Fite (Crossman hardly needs an answer) and proceed direct to our consideration of Popper.

It will be necessary now for us to follow Popper's lead in traversing a considerable stretch of Athenian history and political cabal, with special reference to the relations of democratic and oligarchical programs and action. A brief foreword will prevent a possible misunderstanding. We shall be entering an area of discussion the greater segment of which is common ground. To much of what Popper will be heard to say in approval of Athenian democracy and in condemnation of its oligarchical enemies, our text offers its unqualified agreement. But we must beg to be excused from agreement with a certain number of what we hope to show are mistakes in matters of fact, together with some important omissions; we must reject the oversimplification of the issues, the attribution of motives, and the exaggeration, favorable and unfavorable, which heighten the effect of contrast between opposing political factions. Our main protest must be directed against the manner in which every oligarchic sin has been laid at Plato's door, while every item of Plato's political or ethical creed has been made to appear as his denial of a

⁶⁴ *Ibid* : for the prevailing confusion and immorality, pp. 65-76, esp. pp. 73-74.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

splendid spiritual achievement of democracy. In the light of Popper's explicit disclaimer of the wish to treat Plato as an historical villain (he quotes Shaw's preface to *Saint Joan* as his precedent), it is the more surprising and the more important to note that the moving cause of this whole historical section in Popper's book is precisely to establish Plato's inexcusable, or almost inexcusable guilt.⁶⁷

It will help us to keep our eyes on the main issue amidst the clutter of historical detail, to present here a brief schedule of Popper's chief objectives in his historical section, in the order in which we shall deal with them, as follows:

(1) The representation of the opponents of the democracy at Athens, the so-called oligarchs, as the would-be preservers of the "closed society" against the new spiritual forces of "openness"; and an enumeration of what Popper considers their defining characteristics.

(2) The undermining, as an oligarchical partisan, of the historian Thucydides, the chief source of the prevailing view that Athenian democracy displayed weaknesses responsible for its defeat at the hands of Sparta in the Peloponnesian war.

(3) The discovery in the teachings of the "Great Generation" at Athens of the "new faith . . . of the open society"; and the defense of the Athenian democracy, from Pericles to the period of Plato's maturity, as the bearer of this faith.

(4) The proof that Plato was in all essentials a typical oligarch; the discovery in his political philosophy of all the oligarchical stigmata listed in (1) above, made blacker by treachery to the teachings of the Great Generation.

As will be remembered from our *résumé* of Popper's book in our opening chapter, he describes as the primordial form of social organization the "closed society," which provides its members with a sense of security, based upon predetermined personal status for everyone and readymade answers to all moral problems through customary taboos and prescriptions. The "open society" takes its beginnings from contact with other societies of differing mores, which leads to questioning of taboos; within the society, commerce supplies the chief leverage, widening the area of contact with the outside world, enabling individuals to compete, and by changing their relative status abolishing the old hereditary division into privileged and unprivileged persons. There results a sense of insecurity, but along with it there is born moral responsibility, which is the basis of progress toward humanitarianism, individ-

⁶⁷ Popper, in his earlier edition, p. 165, spoke gravely of "the way in which we may blame" those who, like Plato, still opposed Athenian democracy after its implications had been fully developed by Socrates and

its other champions. In his second edition, p. 181, he has added the words "to some extent" to his condemnation, but without altering his ultimate assessment of Plato as blameworthy in high degree (pp. 191, 194).

ualism, and the remaining virtues of a free society. This change was being accomplished, for the first time in history, in fifth-century Athens, brought about by the friends of democracy, against the diehard opposition of the party of the privileged, the so-called oligarchs.⁶⁸

Accordingly, the first and most significant characteristic of Popper's oligarchs (defined as "the privileged, or formerly privileged" classes of Athens) is self-interested opposition to social change, their second, opposition to the liberalizing forces of trade and commerce, particularly seaborne commerce. For these reasons they were the special foes of the progressive policy of Pericles, that unified and coherent program of an Athens democratically governed, made safe from landward attack by her Long Walls, and occupied with trade, the operation of a great navy, and the administration of a maritime empire.⁶⁹

It should be noted that Popper recognizes the existence of a group of moderate oligarchs, among whom the historian Thucydides is included as a "representative leader," who displayed to the full the above-listed hostilities, but who were, withal, "upright men," the defenders of the "old virtues, and the old religion." The watchword to which they rallied was "Back to the old paternal state"; to these men, who were unwitting tools, "used for their own ends" by the Spartans and the extreme oligarchs, and whose fortune it was to live when "the new faith of the open society . . . was not yet [fully] formulated," Popper extends his forgiveness.⁷⁰ He holds them not guilty of the remaining faults of the oligarchs *par excellence*, to which we now return.

Characteristic of these extreme antidemocrats, from first to last, in Popper's eyes, was treacherous pro-Spartan sympathy. They championed the "arrested oligarchic tribalism of Sparta" against Athenian democracy, and were prepared to betray the vital interests of Athens, even in wartime, in return for Spartan help against their democratic fellow citizens. And in due time, Popper tells us, they succeeded: "the main responsibility for the lost war rests with the treacherous oligarchs who continuously conspired with Sparta."⁷¹

Irreligion and nihilism were associated characteristics; despite his admission that many adherents of the movement were religious conservatives, Popper insists in the same breath that the movement "was itself morally rotten." He ascribes views similar to the ones held by Plato's Callicles and Thrasymachus to those young aristocrats, who, he implies, were the actual oligarchic leaders, though they professed to be democrats; and he cites as climactic proof the case of Critias, who (as Popper has told us in a previous chapter) "was the first to glorify propaganda lies" by celebrating "in cynical

* References for this paragraph are Popper, pp. 167-173, and 179

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174. The Long Walls

connected the city of Athens proper to her seaports.

⁷⁰ Popper, pp. 178-179.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 173-175, 179, 187.

verses" the invention of religion, as the fabrication of a "wise and cunning man" who wished thereby to keep mankind within the boundaries of "law and order."⁷²

Finally, Popper shows us the extreme oligarchs as brutal and ruthless. The repressive and murderous behavior of the Thirty Tyrants, whose "leaders" were Critias and Charmides, is presented as no more than the logical outcome of the program of the movement from beginning to end — that movement, which, he tells us, Plato came at last to join and to abet.⁷³

As an illuminating example of the species oligarch, Popper calls our attention to that pamphlet formerly attributed to Xenophon, the work of the unknown "Pseudo-Xenophon" or the "Old Oligarch," as Zimmern has taught us to call him, whose views on the improper management of slaves at Athens will be remembered from a preceding chapter. Popper tells us that the "central idea" of this writer, which was also "an article of faith with Thucydides and Plato," is the indissoluble connection between the hated Athenian democracy and naval imperialism; the writer also tries to show, according to Popper, that there can be "no compromise" between the two worlds of oligarchy and democracy, and that "only the use of ruthless violence, of total measures, including the acquisition of allies from outside (the Spartans)" can put an end to the democratic system — a program which, Popper implies, the Old Oligarch is in favor of immediately putting in practice. We are asked to regard him as only the first of the "intellectual leaders of the revolt against freedom," who included, of course and particularly, Plato.⁷⁴

Have the oligarchs of Athens been rightly described and delimited in Popper's pages? Before answering this question, we may pause for a moment to discuss the meaning of the terms "oligarch" and "oligarchy." Etymologically, of course, "oligarchy" means simply the "rule of the few." In Plato's day it was possible to employ the word in a generalized sense, covering the predominance in the state of any minority or limited group of citizens. This gives the word a fairly simple meaning, although even here there might be dispute as to whether the term could properly be applied to a government in which the limited group of participants exceeded half of the citizen body. But beyond this point, all simplicity is lost, for a bewildering variety of so-called "oligarchies," actual or merely advocated or described, meets our gaze, differing in the persons or groups to whom predominant power is assigned, in the

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 179 and p. 140. As with others of whom he disapproves, so here with Critias, Popper has further blackened his character by exaggeration. For the verses cited represent religion, though a fabrication, as being aimed at the general good of society, not at the selfish benefit of the cunning fabricator himself. They are not by any means, in themselves, cynical, nor is religion thus

conceived properly to be described simply as a "propaganda lie." Also to be borne in mind is the possibility that the verses, surviving from Critias' play the *Symposium*, express the opinion of a *dramatis personae* rather than of the dramatist.

⁷³ Popper, pp. 192-193

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 182-183.

degree and distribution of the powers, and in the interests, economic and other, which these arrangements were in each case designed to serve.⁷⁵ In these circumstances, a given user of the word "oligarchy" may, as he prefers, employ it in the broad sense, or he may specify the particular variety to which, in his pages, the word is to be understood to refer, and then detail the particular interests which, according to his analysis, this variety subserves. But having made the latter choice, he must beware of extending his application of the word to governmental forms which may be "oligarchic" only in some other sense.

Popper has permitted himself to transgress this rule in more than one way. On an earlier page, engaged in sketching in the background of Plato's life, he has defined the form of oligarchy which Athenian dissidents were constantly endeavoring to restore as "a rule of the leading aristocratic families."⁷⁶ Given this definition of "oligarchy," the term "oligarch" will denote, we may suppose, a person who favors the rule of such families, either in a particular case (his own) or in general; and this is what Popper intended it to mean at that point in his argument, since it is part of his intent to prove that Plato claimed such a prerogative.⁷⁷ But the word "oligarch," thus narrowed, would by no means cover all who were during Plato's lifetime included among the opponents of the Athenian democratic form of government. Popper, accordingly, though he does not withdraw his earlier definition, makes no mention of it in his discussion of the Athenian political scene. His intention here is to identify Plato with the actual proponents of oligarchy at Athens (who were by no means all advocates of the supremacy of aristocratic families), particularly with the more extreme of these; he now introduces, as we have seen, other and more inclusive specifications. It is these new criteria which we have now to examine, and in which we shall find further reason for dissatisfaction.

We note first that Popper's classification of Athenians is strikingly and suspiciously simple. He has divided Athenian society into two camps, and only two; for though he recognizes two subspecies of oligarch, he attaches small moral importance to the distinction, and he mentions no other significant

⁷⁵ Whoever supposes that any single specifiable "few" or kind of "rule" will determine all Greek forms of oligarchy is advised to consult the introduction to Newman's monumental edition of Aristotle's *Politics*, where (vol. IV, pp. xxi ff.) the learned diligence of the editor has added to the four varieties formally recognized by Aristotle eleven others that figure incidentally in various parts of the *Politics*. Plato himself in two different dialogues applies the term to two differently specified forms, and actual proposals made by Athenian op-

ponents of the democracy varied widely. Of one such constitution, classed by Popper unhesitatingly as "oligarchy," in which all governmental functions were to be performed by a chosen body of five thousand citizens, the democratically sympathetic historian Grote says that it was rightly regarded as "tantamount to a democracy" (*History of Greece* (condensed), 1907, pp. 707-708).

⁷⁶ Popper, p. 21.

⁷⁷ For our discussion of this charge, see pp. 459 ff.

groups. On the one side are the oligarchs, all of them privileged or formerly privileged, antidemocratic, foes of the open society, and of its causes and accompaniments, progressive change, commerce, naval enterprise, and empire; on the other are their opposites in all these respects, the friends of openness, the democrats. By this division he has implicitly alleged that the basic characteristics named as a set of related traits may be found conjoined in all, or almost all (we will not require exactitude) of the large number of Athenians, over a long span of years, who opposed the democracy or favored serious changes in the Athenian form of government. And he has further implied that these traits were not significantly characteristic of the democratic interest itself.

This excessive simplicity finds expression in the second feature of Popper's picture of oligarchy, the attribution of uniformly bad motivation to all who thus opposed democracy at Athens. For it will be observed that the criterion of privilege is prominently displayed, and imparts to the oligarchic position the color of self-interest, while the democrats are tacitly relieved of any charge of seeking more than justice: they are but the foes of special favors for any group. And whereas the democrats, by implication, favor commerce and empire for entirely justifiable, even for admirable reasons, the oligarchs appear as motivated in their opposition to all these civilizing activities solely by a clutch after their own vanishing privileges.

The third feature of oligarchy as Popper depicts it is the intensity of wickedness which, by selective emphasis on the activities of its least admirable members, is made to pervade the whole movement. For though Popper has specifically exempted some of its adherents in the earlier years from personal participation in the sins of its extremest members, as we have seen, he has nevertheless said in effect: there is no middle ground. Those who opposed democracy as it was exemplified at Athens lent themselves to the purposes of its most unscrupulous enemies, and if blindness cannot be urged in their favor, they must be equally condemned. Thus oligarchs without distinction are constantly called "treacherous," are said to be, as a whole, "morally rotten," and are typified repeatedly by Critias and the Old Oligarch.

In short, this entire classification, with its simplicity, its damaging ascription of motives, and its intensification, is fitted to serve less as an instrument of understanding than as a basis for condemnation. It is an adaptation to the Athenian political scene of a pattern of inquiry that has become all too familiar in recent decades: the political witch hunt. This consists in designating by a common label a group of persons to whom as a whole are ascribed the combined disapprovable tenets of its severally most extreme members, and then in classifying as an adherent of the group any intended victim whose opinions can be shown to be in any degree similar to these. Such a method, while admirably adapted to secure neatness and clarity of compartmental thinking, is unfitted to take account of the uniqueness of almost any indi-

vidual, and preëminently so in the case of a man like Plato, who by originality and independence of thinking defies simplicity of description and rises above party allegiance.

Now there will be no argument as to the existence at Athens of oligarchs favoring the rule of the few; nor will it be doubted that among these were some who took active, practical steps to secure a change in the constitution, and to establish in power themselves and their friends. Twice during the period discussed, these men inaugurated by revolutionary means their own versions of oligarchy. There were, as Popper has said, clubs to which men of oligarchical sympathies belonged, and on both occasions the clubs formed the nuclei of the sedition.⁷⁸ We shall agree that these actual oligarchs included many who displayed one or more of Popper's set of traits — many who were privileged, many who opposed change or commerce or empire, many even who were in addition pro-Spartan, unscrupulous, or violent.

But we shall submit that in simplifying and schematizing, as he has done, the political situation at Athens, Popper has exceeded the margin of error to which the framer of historical generalizations is entitled. We shall ask the reader to note, first that opposition to democracy might be theoretical, not active or applied to the Athenian scene, and especially that it might not envisage as desirable the installation as rulers of oneself and one's friends, or any existing Athenian "few." Something like this we shall in the end establish as true of Plato. Secondly, turning to consider the practical advocates of a change in the Athenian constitution, we shall show that there were many ways in which a man could display or fail to display any of Popper's listed oligarchic traits, and that these traits and their opposites are not to be found only on that side of the line to which Popper has assigned them. There were, in fact, many intermediate positions and combinations of interests and ideals, held by actual Athenians of the period in question, and there occurred

⁷⁸ A detailed study of these clubs is *Athenian Clubs in Politics and Litigation*, by G. M. Calhoun, 1931. The picture given is of organizations which served several purposes in Athenian life, combining social activities with mutual assistance in seeking political office and in handling legal affairs. The primary purpose varied from club to club, and might change as the members' interests changed. Citizens of all walks of life and of all political colors belonged to them. Pericles belonged to a club, and so did many quiet citizens of moderate views. But greater notoriety attached to those clubs to which dissolute young men like Alcibiades belonged, or to that club of wealthy oligarchic sympathizers to which, it was believed, the crime of mutilating the square

stone images of Hermes was traced in 415 B.C. Some of them were actively engaged in revolutionary activities preceding the oligarchic revolutions of 412 and 404, the clubs to which men of oligarchic sympathies belonged forming convenient closed circles for the confidential interchange of treasonable views before the *coup* was openly avowed. Because of this, clubs as such were after these events thought of by some as likely to be antidemocratic. And it was recognized that they could enable their members to pervert the ends of justice in the courts. But that they did not cease to be common features of Athenian life we know from Socrates' reference in the *Apology*, 36 B, where he lists them among the usual pre-occupations of politically active Athenians.

marked shifts in the composition and alignment of political groups, as the years passed. And although we shall not be able to take the reader through a review of the many decades of Athenian history which would have to be traversed if we were to document this case in detail, we propose to present sufficient evidence in connection with each of Popper's criteria to show their inadequacy and unfairness in the use to which he has put them. Let us begin with that trait which, on Popper's scheme, since for him opposition to the birth of the "open society" is the worst crime against humanity, is the most basic oligarchic characteristic — opposition to social change.

It is of course true that in so far as democracy itself was relatively a new thing, all those who opposed democracy, as such, were the opponents of social change; and in so far as Athenian democracy seems to us good, and in the direction of openness, they were the opponents of progress. Democracy, however, as Popper is also aware, does not appear except in conjunction with other social changes, and it is in respect to these that differences of attitude are to be examined. Is it true that all antidemocrats are opposed to all these concomitant changes, democrats to none? And is it morally indefensible to oppose, for any reason or to any extent, any of them?

To restate with some modification Popper's exposition, we can indeed observe in Athenian development an example of that close companionship between the growth of trade and the coming about of those conditions of urban social organization out of which alone "high cultures" of the type accredited in the Western world have taken their rise. And, as always, the achievement of this progress was at a cost, indeed at a double cost: the destruction of some of the old values and the generation of some new evils. The older values, as Popper has acknowledged, were not without their honest and disinterested defenders. But we must also recognize, what Popper denies, that it was still possible to wish to conserve the older values even after the new values had become established. It was possible to believe that some of the old values might be retained along with the best of the new; it was even possible, for those who saw the new accompanied by and vitiated by what appeared to be inherent evils, to idealize the old, and to wish in some degree to reverse the change — all without vicious intent or selfishness. A conservative Athenian of Plato's day, even in Plato's latest years, could thus desire to restore not alone the security of that older society, but also what he believed to be its hardihood, its courage, its regard for the sanctities of oaths and the ties of common citizenship or blood, its rural simplicity, and its purity of religious faith — any or all of these. He could reject the competitive struggle for gain, the fickle and irresponsible conduct of public affairs under the leadership of demagogues, the vindictiveness and violence of political conflict, the prejudiced administration of justice, and the grasping after imperial power which appeared at times to be inseparable from the new order.

And if the antidemocrats could thus oppose change for what seemed to

vidual, and preëminently so in the case of a man like Plato, who by originality and independence of thinking defies simplicity of description and rises above party allegiance.

Now there will be no argument as to the existence at Athens of oligarchs favoring the rule of the few; nor will it be doubted that among these were some who took active, practical steps to secure a change in the constitution, and to establish in power themselves and their friends. Twice during the period discussed, these men inaugurated by revolutionary means their own versions of oligarchy. There were, as Popper has said, clubs to which men of oligarchical sympathies belonged, and on both occasions the clubs formed the nuclei of the sedition.⁷⁸ We shall agree that these actual oligarchs included many who displayed one or more of Popper's set of traits — many who were privileged, many who opposed change or commerce or empire, many even who were in addition pro-Spartan, unscrupulous, or violent.

But we shall submit that in simplifying and schematizing, as he has done, the political situation at Athens, Popper has exceeded the margin of error to which the framer of historical generalizations is entitled. We shall ask the reader to note, first that opposition to democracy might be theoretical, not active or applied to the Athenian scene, and especially that it might not envisage as desirable the installation as rulers of oneself and one's friends, or any existing Athenian "few." Something like this we shall in the end establish as true of Plato. Secondly, turning to consider the practical advocates of a change in the Athenian constitution, we shall show that there were many ways in which a man could display or fail to display any of Popper's listed oligarchic traits, and that these traits and their opposites are not to be found only on that side of the line to which Popper has assigned them. There were, in fact, many intermediate positions and combinations of interests and ideals, held by actual Athenians of the

marked shifts in the composition and alignment of political groups, as the years passed. And although we shall not be able to take the reader through a review of the many decades of Athenian history which would have to be traversed if we were to document this case in detail, we propose to present sufficient evidence in connection with each of Popper's criteria to show their inadequacy and unfairness in the use to which he has put them. Let us begin with that trait which, on Popper's scheme, since for him opposition to the birth of the "open society" is the worst crime against humanity, is the most basic oligarchic characteristic — opposition to social change.

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And if the antidemocrats could thus oppose change for what seemed to

them virtuous reasons, so, too, could the Athenian democracy itself. Popper makes no mention in this connection of the existence of a democratic desire to arrest change or to oppose progress, with especial reference to the "openness" of Athenian society, yet such there was — the bigoted suppression, even the putting to death of religious innovators and supposed blasphemers, and the pride of pure Athenian blood, the jealous refusal to extend the rights of citizenship, which characterized the Athenian *dêmos*.⁷⁹ We see thus that the desire to arrest change, and in particular to arrest change in the direction of greater tolerance and universalism, will not serve as a simple criterion by which to divide Athenians into oligarchs and democrats.

But what of hatred of Athenian commerce and empire, the desire to return to the stable agrarian society, which is also set forth as an illiberal oligarchic aim? We concede that some degree of this feeling was frequent among oligarchs. But here, too, we shall meet complications, tendencies, and interests which cut across the simple line of cleavage. Popper has presented to us the Old Oligarch as the type of the extreme antidemocrat, ready to let loose, it is implied, the dogs of civil war and foreign intervention, in essence the upholder of what was later to be Plato's position, and sharing with both Plato and Thucydides the heart of his doctrine, the condemnation of naval imperialism as inseparable from democracy. Let us, with no intention of giving this unlovely and unsympathetic ancient writer a clean bill of health, look a little more closely at what he has said.

One can take no exception to the accuracy of Popper's report of the Old Oligarch's dislike of the common man and the political power and advantage perforce accorded him in the democratic scheme of things at Athens. The commoners uniformly appear in stark opposition to the "noble" and the "good," as the "bad" or the "worthless." The fundamental fault in the Athenian constitution is the perfectly necessary (for otherwise the navy could not operate effectively) but otherwise entirely objectionable granting of freedom and power to the commoners; and if a proper constitution were desired, it would be necessary to entrust the framing of new laws to wise men, who would at once demote these creatures to the position of slaves.⁸⁰

But as one reads on, his attention is attracted by some features which Popper's review had not taught him to expect. He is scheduled for a surprise in chapter II, where he will learn of the advantages (as Pericles also describes them, in his Funeral Oration, reported by Thucydides) to be derived from life in Athens; of its wealth, its enjoyment of imported luxuries, made possible by control of the sea. There may indeed be irony in the assertion that the Athenians have a diet, a costume, and a language enriched by contributions from both the Greek and the barbarian nations.⁸¹ But there is straightforward congratulation in the mention of Athens' security from the effects of crop fail-

⁷⁹ See pp. 316, 322, and n. 236, p. 227.

⁸⁰ Pseudo-Xen., *Constitution of Athens* I, 8.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* II, 7.

ures, and there is pride and admiration in the depiction of Athens' immense power as mistress of the sea to dictate to other nations and to ravage their territories at will⁸² True, it is admitted, Athens has one weakness, in that Attica is not an island though the *dêmos* is secure within the Long Walls, the farmers and the aristocrats suffer when Attica is invaded and there is also danger that, if internal sedition should arise, a foreign army could be introduced by land, but the Athenians consider these disadvantages unimportant in comparison with the very great advantages of naval power⁸³ From Popper's account, we should hardly have expected the endorsement, implied in the celebration of Athenian wealth and power, of the Long Walls, the harbor, and the fleet — in short, the praise of (democratic) empire⁸⁴

We have seen here the apparently opposing views that may be brought together in the mind of a single man who, so far at least as his sympathies are concerned, is an undoubtedly genuine example of the oligarchic tribe But what of Popper's suggestion of this same man's treasonable intent to call in the Spartans to overthrow the democracy? We have seen that the Old Oligarch recognizes the possibility that some dissidents might wish to summon foreigners to their aid And in a later chapter, he says also that the Athenian *dêmos* have learned from their unsuccessful experience the unwisdom of trying to cooperate with states, like Sparta, whose constitutions differ radically from their own⁸⁵ But he does not advocate the opening of the city gates to the enemy, nor does he propose to improve relations with Sparta by appropriate changes in the Athenian constitution Instead, the conclusion of the whole little work is a passage denying that within the Athenian state there exists any appreciable number of malcontents, deprived unjustly of their political rights, with whose aid it would be possible to overthrow the state⁸⁶ Surely this assertion of the impregnability of Athens would form a strange conclusion to a pamphlet aiming at inciting her enemies to an attack No, the message of the Old Oligarch is not a call to arms, quite the reverse, it is, in its strange and caustic way, a "peace pamphlet," warning those who live under an opposite rule that though they may congratulate themselves upon the excellence of their constitution in point of true virtue, nevertheless the Athenian way, in spite of its one great flaw, has many merits, and above all, strength

The foregoing discussion of the Old Oligarch shows, first, that Popper's list of oligarchic traits constitutes an oversimplification so extreme that it cannot even be used to describe his type case, second that Popper has here, as in other connections, mixed with a considerable quantity of learning a small but active principle of arbitrariness sufficient to infect the whole, and

⁸² *Ibid* II 6 and 11-13

⁸³ *Ibid* II 14-16

⁸⁴ A. W. Gomme "The Old Oligarch" *Athenian Studies* 1940 p. 231 agrees that the Old Oligarch "is not like Plato averse

to the material advantages of Athens' unique position"

⁸⁵ *Pseudo Xen* III 10-11

⁸⁶ *Ibid* III 12-13

thirdly, that by this distortion he has created an impression full of malign implications for the character of Plato, as well as of Thucydides. For though Plato, and in some sense Thucydides also, were opposed to democracy as it was exemplified at Athens in the years of the Peloponnesian war, we have already displayed enough of Plato's views to show that his opposition to democracy was not of the same sort as that of the Old Oligarch; we shall show the same for Thucydides below. And though the Old Oligarch was undoubtedly in sympathy with oligarchy, he was not averse, as Plato was, to the profit and power of commerce and empire.

Another instance of the realistic love of empire and naval power among the extreme Athenian oligarchs, meets us in Thucydides' account (VIII, 91) of the oligarchic conspirators of 411 B.C., the so-called "Four Hundred." These men had seized power in Athens, but had failed to win over the Athenians of the fleet, which at that time was based on Samos. Seeing that they were liable to be attacked at any moment by their own fellow citizens of the fleet, they were making desperate efforts to negotiate a peace with Sparta on the most favorable terms to themselves: "For their first wish was to continue as oligarchs and hold sway over their allies; failing that, to be independent and in possession of the ships and the walls; but should this too be cut off, then at any rate to avoid being the first victims of the restored democracy, by calling in the enemy and making shift without walls and ships, let the city's affairs go as they would, so long as their own persons were secure." We have here a clear demonstration that the oligarchic heart could vibrate to the iron (and golden) string of empire.

Once we have shaken off the illusion that the line of cleavage drawn by Popper will enable us to place every man Jack of the Athenians on his proper side in the struggle, the sooner we shall be able to see that even though a given man (Plato, for instance) displayed in some sense every one of the traits which Popper lists as essentially oligarchic, he was not necessarily at all like Popper's typical oligarch.

It will also become apparent that among those who may be roughly described as conservatives — men who wished to preserve the values of the older social order, and who must therefore in Popper's terms, be classified as oligarchs — there may be found earnest champions of some of the more enlightened values of the new order. On a later page, Popper has admitted to membership in the Great Generation two "great conservatives," Sophocles and Thucydides — both oligarchs; and he has recognized in Thucydides some traces of humanitarianism. Nor is he blind to the existence in the "period of transition," as he calls it, of the "wavering" Euripides, and the "skeptical" Aristophanes.⁸⁷ Our quarrel with Popper here is mainly that he has not taken account of them in drawing his picture of oligarchy, has not modified its

⁸⁷ Popper, p. 180.

blackness by the addition of their splendor, and in consequence has failed to do as justice would require, namely: to agree that "oligarchs," even as he defines them, were often men of insight and human worth, and that Plato was one of these. That he has not done so he justifies by his special principle of limitation, according to which those oligarchs are to be forgiven, and only those, who lived before that rather vague date after which the message of the open society was fully formulated — a proviso which, as we have said above, and as we shall show further good reason to believe below, need not be accepted.

We may with full justice ask the reader to recollect the attitude of Euripides toward the possibility of human excellence in the slave or in the lowly-born, and to observe simultaneously that Euripides, as is well-attested,⁸⁸ was an opponent of the extreme democracy, the advocate of a moderate oligarchy, somewhat on the lines of Thucydides. As another example of the very common tendency among able and good Athenians to combine the traits which Popper sees as distinctively oligarchic with others which he reserves for the democracy, we may also claim Aristophanes, who could nurse the sweet dream of restoring the old agricultural economy, with its associated virtues of temperance and piety, and deplore the dangers that he thought inseparable from the new education, and yet in the midst of his jesting could espouse, as simple common sense, such liberal and humane measures as the granting of citizenship rights to resident aliens and allies, and the raising of the allied cities from the status of subjects to a position of parity.⁸⁹ Having observed these men, we may be able to understand the attitude of Plato, who felt that democracy as it was exemplified at Athens must be rejected almost *in toto*, yet could nevertheless accept no form of government in its place which did not preserve one of the prime benefits of that democracy, the security from injustice, the welfare and dignity of the common man, in striking contrast to the Old Oligarch's bitter conviction that a rightly ordered state would see him every inch a slave.

Our discussion thus far will have fulfilled its intention if it has shown that there were antidemocrats who were not at the same time opponents, as the case might be, of empire, or of commerce, or of the welfare of the common man; that there were antidemocrats, as well as democrats, with whose enthusiasm for unbounded power and wealth Plato could no more have sympathized than with a Callicles or an Archelaus; and that there was more than one spirit in which a man could oppose democracy, or change, or commerce

⁸⁸ *Supp.* 238ff., *Orestes* 917ff., *Electra* 380ff.

⁸⁹ This is the interpretation put upon *Lysistrata* 574-586 by W. S. Ferguson, *Cambridge Ancient History*, V, p. 325. In another passage also cited by Ferguson (p. 360), *Frogs* 686-737, Aristophanes, in the

midst of a rather race-proud plea to the Athenians to forgive the citizens who had participated in the oligarchic revolution of 412-411, incidentally approves such measures as the granting of citizenship to the slaves and aliens who had manned the ships at Arginusae.

and empire, without being the enemy of all that was good in the life of contemporary Athens

To Popper's succeeding ascriptions to the extremest oligarchs of being treasonably pro Spartan, morally ruthless, and cynically irreligious, the pattern of the preceding discussion is also applicable. In each case the neglect of significant diversities among those who are held to exemplify the given characteristic has produced not portrait but caricature. There were "pro Spartans" at Athens, as we learn from Plato's *Protagoras*, whose cachet of Spartan superiority was a military mantle and a cauliflower ear,⁹⁰ there were others, like Socrates⁹¹ and perhaps Antisthenes,⁹² who saw other and deeper values in the Spartan way of life. There was the historian Herodotus, who could accord Sparta admiration second only to his approval of Athens, and dream of a united Greece under the leadership of both.⁹³ There were also men like Thucydides, who in their banishment could visit Sparta and study impartially her point of view, weighing her outmoded strengths against the new but precarious strength of Athens,⁹⁴ and men like Xenophon, who could serve Sparta's interests even in war, without losing, in some sense, their attachment to Athens, and (in Xenophon's case) his loyalty to Socrates and hatred of the Thirty Tyrants.⁹⁵ There were also the betrayers of Athens to Sparta to save their own skins, like Alcibiades, who served, as he said, that city which gave him security, but would doubtless have preferred that the city should be Athens.

As to moral rottenness, the only monopoly that the evidence warrants us in imputing is that which sociology would lead us to expect while poverty and the need to make a livelihood in a hard world sometimes produces its own sort of moral blight, the rarer "fleurs du mal" of elegant skepticism and self-indulgence would seem to have been cultivated at Athens, as elsewhere, in the "Adonis gardens" of the leisured few. In Xenophon's account of Critias,⁹⁶ there is evidence of a sensuality that exceeded the bounds of what Athens was prepared to accept, and in the mocking of the Mysteries and the mutilation of the images of Hermes, we have record of what may fairly be called profligate irreligion. But again, these are isolated examples which we cannot permit Popper to identify as attributes of the "movement itself." Repression and the readiness to resort to murder and violence are indeed proved against the Thirty Tyrants, but before we extend this trait to all adherents even of the extremest oligarchic position, three things should be taken into account: that revolutions are apt to throw up into positions of leadership the more resolute and fanatical adherents of the victorious party, and further to corrupt these men by the unwonted exercise of absolute power, that at Athens,

⁹⁰ *Protagoras* 342 B-C

⁹¹ See p. 304

⁹² See pp. 210-211

⁹³ See p. 290

⁹⁴ See pp. 606-608

⁹⁵ Xenophon *Hellenica* II 3-4

⁹⁶ Xenophon *Memorabilia* I 2 29-30

successive alternations of democrat and oligarch had produced increased vindictiveness on the part of the victors; and that, as Thucydides has told us, in the Greek world of that date, political murder and the wholesale putting to death of defeated factions in civil strife had become the order of the day, and was no monopoly of oligarchs.

We have thus shown that Popper's picture of the oligarchic interest has been so far oversimplified as to be seriously inaccurate, and that it has been overintensified in its disapprovable aspects in such a way as to do injustice to almost any individual who should subsequently be described as an adherent of the oligarchic movement. We must now deal, as promised, with Popper's account of Thucydides as a historian, since he is a principal source of our knowledge of the period. In three words, Popper's thesis is that Thucydides is himself an oligarch, showing the traits Popper has assigned to oligarchs in general; and that Thucydides' *History* is a party book, and its strictures upon the Athenian democracy not worth our credence. We shall herewith offer a summary reply, relegating to our note⁹⁷ the task of a point-for-point examination of Popper's argument.

Thucydides has chosen a method of writing history which reduces to a minimum his own explicit comments upon the action. He seldom stops to cheer the players, or to speak sternly to those guilty of a breach of rules. For the most part his judgments are, so to say, embodied in the events he has chosen to report, in their bearing upon the course and consequences of the great struggle, the Peloponnesian war, which is his subject. He concedes much to the operation of impersonal forces which in his belief man cannot abolish, though it is often possible, given the necessary knowledge and decisiveness of action, to channel them in a direction of advantage. Many of his finest effects are achieved dramatically through directly reported speeches of the political and military leaders on both sides, speeches which he has told us are not always precise reports, but rather reconstructions of what was or might most illuminatingly have been said in the circumstances. Again he will employ a sort of dramatic irony, as when he juxtaposes the episode of the Athenian attack upon Melos — extreme example of selfish imperialism, naked and unashamed — with the solemnity and high hopefulness of the sailing forth of the Athenian expedition to Sicily — the tragic rushing upon inevitable doom. Throughout, the historian has been at obvious and self-declared pains to collect and to verify his raw materials, the outward facts, the wheres, whens, and by whoms. But — point crucial to our interest — has the historian remained a historian on the level of his serious judgments of the causal interconnections of events, or is Popper justified?

⁹⁷ Our attempt to answer Popper's arguments against the trustworthiness of Thucydides as witness to the faults of the

Athenian democratic government, appears as Appendix VIII, pp. 601ff.

It would, of course, be worse than idle to deny that Thucydides is throughout his work maintaining a point of view. He was far from indifferent to the shattering events in progress around him. He can even be shown to have yielded in one instance (VIII, 73) to the human frailty of gratuitously gibing at a demagogue who was, to him, particularly offensive, thereby violating his own rule of omitting from the record everything that was not organically related to his theme. But aside from such rare departures, his maintenance of a point of view is far from proving what Popper's case demands. For it is not possible without begging the question to assume that the point of view in question was substituted for a set of unequivocal and contrary facts which any honest observer with half an eye could not have failed to see. How if the facts were substantially as Thucydides has interpreted them? Should Thucydides' final judgment, which issued in what may be called "oligarchical sympathies," have been suppressed? And who is in a position to go behind Thucydides to offer an objective criterion by which to measure the essential fairness of his mind? Again, we remind our reader that we are not engaged in arguing, on the authority of Thucydides or any other, that Athenian democracy ought never to have seen the light. Our more modest intention is to show that serious criticism of it, even the rejection of many of its essential features, does not prove moral turpitude, or a mind blinded by prejudice and self-interest.

We must not be led beyond the limits of the quite limited degree of certainty here available. But unless one is willing to ignore the all but unanimous ruling of ancient and modern readers, it is surely a violation of historical probability to throw out of court a document so rich in evidence as Thucydides' *History*, without the authority of any other more reliable witness, and merely on the grounds of what appear to be highly precarious subjective suspicions.

The truth is that every one of Popper's assertions touching the quick of the issue — his picture of Thucydides the oligarch, filled, as such, with the partisan desire to arrest change, and to fight the empire and commerce, is substantially at odds with the conclusions reached by those qualified specialists whose arguments we have been able to examine. Bury viewed Thucydides as a species of ancient Machiavelli, for whom power and pragmatic efficiency formed the standard of approvable statecraft. Finley and Gomme, in impressive mutual agreement, have stressed his appreciation of the Periclean regime, with its prerequisite of power, especially naval power, as constituting an advance over the old static agricultural economy still represented by backward Sparta, and have found in him the regretful spectator and analyst of the deterioration of Athenian national life in consequence of its corruption at the hands of the less enlightened and selfishly disunited party leaders who assumed control after the death of the great statesman. More recently, Grene has asked us to view Thucydides as the cold, proud, aspiring achiever of an

"everlasting possession" in his own flawless history, a counterpart to the memorable, almost inhuman grandeur of the Athenian empire under Pericles.

And so Popper is left alone in undisputed possession of a Thucydides largely of his own contriving (at least, he has given us no indication of any supporting authorities), a Thucydides tailored in strict conformity to the fashion that Popper has decreed an oligarch of his subvariety must wear. The imperfections that may be found in the historian prove little more than his human imperfection; they do nothing to impair his essential reliability as historian of his own time, in experience, ability, and devotion to his task, second to none.

We have seen how, in the treatment of the oligarchical interest at Athens, the rough edges of political history have been smoothed over under Popper's hand into conformity with a simpler and more logical scheme. We must now expect the same sort of recrystallization of intellectual history around the axis of his preference, in his account of that group of outstanding men whom he has called the "Great Generation," and of the Athenian *dêmos* during the corresponding period.

In our examination of this subject we shall ourselves be cast in a rather unseemly role. We shall have to appear as diminishers of the glory of some really glorious names; in these circumstances we may be permitted to say a word of deprecation. In what follows, we shall strive to pluck no stars from the crowns of the great ones in question save those that adulation has unwarrantably put there, and which serve by contrast to darken Plato, but it will also be incumbent upon us to take the initiative in pointing out some limitations upon the greatness of the Great Generation, for the similar reason that injury is done to Plato if he is measured by a standard set higher than the true level of his time.

We must begin by calling attention to what is doubtless an inadvertence, though it functions as a fallacy: an illegitimate concentration in the lighting which serves to enhance the brilliance of effect. For what Popper has called a generation actually spans a tract of time more nearly equal to a century. By including Protagoras and Pericles as well as Antisthenes and Alcidas, he has been able to bring on the stage, as if contemporaries, men who were born some half a century before Plato, along with men whose activity reaches into the latest period of Plato's life. By this extension of his range, Popper is able to extend correspondingly the number and luminosity of Plato's rivals and reputed superiors. We shall review these persons briefly, one by one.

Pericles worked steadily and, few would question, effectively, in behalf of the rights and interests, as he saw them, of the citizens of Athens. For many years he led them with supreme authority without overriding them, remaining at all times subject to the electorate. We recognize in him (but let us not forget his obligation to the genius of the historian Thucydides, who has so

persuasively reported him) a great voice lifted in behalf of the splendid cultural ideal which his own practice furthered: an Athens beautiful and free, in which citizens, each according to his capacity, could share the direction of their common concerns in mutual toleration, holding up to the whole of Greece a model of what human life could be at its most intelligent and gracious best. This in all conscience is a sufficient basis upon which a monument to Pericles the democratic statesman has been firmly reared. But it is insufficient to support the claim that Popper has entered in his behalf,⁹⁸ that he championed a universalistic democracy. When, in 451-450 B.C., Pericles secured the passage of a law restricting the Athenian citizenship to those descended from citizen parents on both sides, he was acting as clearly within the ambit of democracy in the ancient sense as he was violating the spirit of what the term signifies in the modern world. To deprive some five thousand persons of their citizenship for no other offense than this seems to us essentially undemocratic. But if, with Pericles and his contemporaries, we mean by democracy the special interest of all members of a closed society of citizens, then plainly this diminution of the number of "shareholders" was a democratic measure, since it raised the quotient of advantage left when the number of citizens is divided into the quantity of available privilege; but it was not democracy in the universalistic sense. Popper has indeed anticipated this criticism, but he has not neutralized it by his entirely undocumented reference to Pericles' having toward the end of his life "revised his attitude toward these matters, probably under the influence of such men as Protagoras."⁹⁹

Just here we may notice in passing an ambiguous quotation which tends to extend beyond defensible limits the "openness" of Pericles' ideal Athens. Quoting from the Funeral Oration sentences which do honor to its author both in his eyes and in ours, Popper includes among them the proud boast: "Our city is thrown open to the world; we never expel a foreigner . . ."¹⁰⁰ The harm here is done by the three dots. One might well suppose from Popper's avowed purpose in introducing the quotations, that is, to exemplify the "humanitarian and universalistic" spirit of the Oration, that Pericles is here heard announcing a policy of universal admission of foreigners to the privileges of citizenship, or at least magnanimously extolling the Athenian policy of admitting them freely to residence. What the three dots have obscured from view is that Pericles is not here talking within the context of citizenship or permanent residence. He is speaking of military policy; the omitted sequel is his boast that Athens is not afraid of what foreign spies may learn from observation on the ground, of her state of military readiness.

Basic constituent in the intellectual program of Popper's Great Generation, as we saw at length in an earlier chapter, was an antislavery plank, or at

⁹⁸ Popper, p. 181.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 533, note 16 to chapter 6.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

the least a theoretical denial of the basis of a natural distinction between slave and free. But one searches the record in vain for the slightest indication of Periclean opposition to this institution, without which his whole political system, as actually organized, could scarcely have functioned. Nor does Popper report the discovery of any such evidence. And the same may be said of another supposed tenet of the Great Generation, namely, the cosmopolitan denial of the "natural" difference between Greeks and barbarians. But by a series of overlapping pronouncements Popper has so associated the name of Pericles with democracy, and democracy with freedom, and freedom with antislavery and antinationalism,¹⁰¹ that no reader could be expected to refrain from drawing from the sorites the unwarranted conclusion that Pericles was to some degree, at least, an abolitionist and, toward the end of his life, a believer in racial equality.

Nor is there any indication that Pericles had any plan for the emancipation of that other oppressed group, Athenian women. This is perhaps surprising in view of his own practical preachment, by his relation to Aspasia, of the liberal ideal. But what is arresting almost to the point of dramatic irony, is that passage in the Funeral Oration upon which we earlier commented, in which he pronounces most worthy of honor that Athenian matron who is least talked about among the men. One can but wonder whether the implications of this for the most talked about (and against) woman in Athens, had crossed the great statesman's mind.

Since, as we have already heard, and are scheduled to hear at greater length, one of Plato's major offenses was that he cherished an "organic" theory of the state, in contrast to the free individualism of the Periclean ideal, it is a matter of some importance to inquire whether it is true that, as Popper supposes, this ideal was one of undiluted individualism, or was perhaps itself "infected," to some degree, with organicism. In considering the Funeral Oration with this question in mind, one must, of course, make due allowance for the nature of the occasion, an honoring of the city's dead, and for the underlying motivation of a speech in war time, delivered by the war leader himself. Both considerations would prompt us to expect accent on the enduring life of the fatherland, for which it is sweet to die. But the thought of the statesman-orator is not content to rest at this point. He appeals to his auditors to contemplate an Athens that transcends all other goods, all other affections: "You must yourselves realize the power of Athens and feed your eyes upon her from day to day, till love of her fills your hearts; and then when all her greatness shall break upon you . . ." ¹⁰² Is it too much to say that this Athens, under the glowing imagination and devotion of her great custodian, has become something, may we say, metaphysically more than the sum of its human parts, past and present, that it has been reified and deified into an end-in-itself, and, as it

¹⁰¹ Popper, p. 180-181.

¹⁰² Thucydides II, 43, translated by Craw-

ley, Modern Library, New York, 1943, p. 107.

were, is conceived not as the claimant and recipient but as the source of values? This impression is strengthened when, just before the close, he offers to those bereaved parents who are still of an age to have children the (to him) consoling hope that further offspring will not only help them to forget those whom they have lost, but "will be to the state at once a reinforcement and a security."¹⁰³ We would not press the point beyond a certain minimum, but this suggestion of state worship, untempered even by subordination to any higher law, may help us to reach a juster estimate of Plato's lesser commitment when on occasion he speaks of the common interest over against the individual, in a manner that Popper has sharply rebuked. We shall then do well to remember that it is not within reason to expect any Greek, whether Plato or Pericles, to have reached that deeper appreciation of the individual person which the Christian centuries have so slowly and so painfully achieved.

The speech of Pericles contains a suggestion of another attitude deeply condemned by Popper, the concept of the state — one's own state — as standing above the moral law and measurable only by its power. There is a sentence in which Pericles celebrates the invincible power of Athens and of her citizens, declaring: "We have forced every sea and land to be the highway of our daring, and everywhere, whether for evil or for good, have left imperishable monuments behind us."¹⁰⁴ The Athens for which Athenians are invited to die is not, then, simply the moral ideal embodied in the justice and liberty accorded its citizens. In its external aspect, it is frankly an amoral glory.

Nowhere, perhaps, do we find Pericles falling more clearly short of the exaggerated moral heights on which his admirer has fondly conceived him to stand, than in his relation to the development of the Athenian empire. We are not suggesting that on the standards applied to other empire-builders, Pericles' policy was particularly reprehensible. Neither was it beyond reproach on contemporary Greek standards, and *a fortiori*, it was far below the level suggested by such words as "universalistic" and "humanitarian."

Popper has asked us to think of the revenues flowing into the Athenian treasury not as tribute, but as a sort of moderate tax paid out for services received.¹⁰⁵ Herein, if Plutarch is to be believed, Popper has the support of no less a man than Pericles himself, who is said to have reassured the Athenians that they were "in no way obliged to give any account of these moneys to their allies, so long as they maintained their defense," adding that "they should convert the overplus . . . to such undertakings" (temples and other public works) "as would hereafter . . . give them eternal honour, and for the present . . . freely supply all the inhabitants" (of Athens) "with plenty."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Thucydides II, 44, translated by Crawley, Modern Library, New York, 1943, p. 108.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 41. In Pericles' later oration,

Thucydides II, 64, a similar attitude is taken.

¹⁰⁵ Popper, p. 177.

¹⁰⁶ Plutarch, *Life of Pericles*, ch. XII; translated by Dryden, Modern Library, New York, 1932, pp. 191-192. Plutarch, however,

In Plutarch's report, Pericles is represented as speaking as of right; in Thucydides, in an oration delivered in the second year of the war, he is shown speaking with less righteousness and more realism. Warning the Athenians that they must, whether they will or no, fight to retain their empire, he says, "For what you hold is, to speak somewhat plainly, a tyranny; to take it perhaps was wrong, but to let it go is unsafe."¹⁰⁷ That Thucydides has on the whole not misrepresented the convictions of Pericles here is, we believe, past doubt, particularly for those who with Popper are convinced that the Funeral Oration is in all essentials pure Pericles; it is indeed unthinkable that Thucydides could, even had he the motive so to do, have imputed to so thoroughly well known a leader views obviously other than his own.

Pericles is also, like Winston Churchill, quite willing to remind his fellow citizens that material values tremble in the balance when empire is at stake.¹⁰⁸ In the Funeral Oration itself, one notes the reference to the fruits of empire and trade, which Athenians, so to speak, could have for breakfast.¹⁰⁹ The city upon which he asks his hearers to turn their eyes is not merely an imponderable ideal; it is the "megalopolis," also, that his mind dwells upon, a city great in material size and wealth;¹¹⁰ and he even speaks with satisfaction of what we may call the "stately homes of Athens."¹¹¹ We need not presume to "cast sour looks" upon the worldly standards herein implied, and from our heights expect the Athenians to have borne the burdens of empire out of sheer ethical obligation. It is merely that we are here presented with one more obvious aspect of Periclean "democracy" which neither Plato nor conscientious democrats today are under any moral necessity to applaud.

Following the precedent set by Popper, we can very briefly deal with Herodotus, who enters the scene merely as one who was "welcomed and hailed in Pericles' city as the author of a work that glorified" the Periclean principles of "equality before the law, and of political individualism."¹¹² That Herodotus celebrated Athens, and was welcomed there, is not in dispute; what I shall show cause to deny is that the qualities celebrated were in any real sense identical with those that Popper has defined as the faith of the Great Generation.

The *Histories* of Herodotus are, in general, more profitable to enjoy than to dissect: the mingling of irrepressible curiosity, narrative skill, broad sympathies which did not exclude barbarian peoples,¹¹³ genuine and generous

is not nearly so dependable a source as Thucydides, cited below; cf. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, 1945, p. 65 ff., esp. p. 66.

¹⁰⁷ Thucydides II, 64, translated by Crawley, Modern Library, New York, 1934, p. 118. That Pericles' attitude toward the allied cities was that of "master" rather than "friend" is also the conclusion of Merritt, Wade-Gery, and McGregor, *The Athenian Tribute Lists*, III, 1950, pp. 278-281.

¹⁰⁸ Thucydides II, 62.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* II, 38.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* II, 38, 43, 64

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* II, 38.

¹¹² Popper, p. 180.

¹¹³ This is not to say that Herodotus was without a lively sense of certain capital points of Hellenic cultural superiority. He regards barbarians as typically prone to violations of human decency in the treatment of the dead (IX, 78), and to a "silly

hatred of tyranny — in the presence of these qualities, criticism dissolves into appreciation. But for the sake of just perspective, we must observe that though fully contemporary with Pericles, his mind and imagination belonged to an earlier day. Upon the surface of his book there float expressions of the "enlightenment," borrowed, perhaps, from Protagoras, whom he probably knew;¹¹⁴ but at a deeper level he remained faithful to the standards political, moral, and religious that the "men of Marathon" had proclaimed. The liberty of which he speaks is freedom from tyranny and from foreign rule, his praise of "*isagoria*" — equal freedom of speech, or, generalized, equality —, though applied to Athenians, contains nothing distinctive of the "new democracy,"¹¹⁵ and might, indeed, have been pronounced, with slight verbal alterations, in an encomium upon Sparta. The war that he is prepared to fight is not the war between Athens and Sparta on whose brink he stood — he witnessed the first few years. His war is still that of the free Greeks under the leadership of Athens and Sparta against the barbarians, the Persians, who do not know true freedom; a war, we may notice, whose principle was to be approved by the author of the *Menexenus* and of the *Republic*, and an Athens which was to be a source of inspiration to the author of the *Laws*, without in the least commending him to Popper's favor.

A frequent and distinguished visitor in Periclean Athens was the sophist Protagoras, who was honored by Pericles in a dual capacity, by appointment to an important legislative commission and by being given the task of furthering the education of his two sons.¹¹⁶ That Protagoras was among the most gifted of the sophists, that his educational program, designed to impart the skills required both for private life and for participation in public affairs, deserves honorable mention in any history of education, and that he cast out, by way of underpropping his practical platform, some stimulating if undeveloped ideas bearing on the nature and origin of knowledge and of culture, is the almost unanimous verdict of modern scholarship,¹¹⁷ in which probably Plato himself (with important reservations) would concur. To Protagoras' credit, also, is the candor with which he declared his inability to judge whether or not gods exist or what their form might be, a declaration for which, as

superstitiousness" which the "clever Greeks" have outgrown (I, 60, 3). And the abhorrence of despotism is, he thinks, a distinctively Hellenic achievement (VII, 102). In all this, Herodotus reflects what Shorey has called "normal Greek feeling" (*What Plato Said*, 1933, p. 600).

¹¹⁴ W. Nestle, *Vom Mythos zum Logos*, p. 509.

¹¹⁵ I owe this admirable observation to How and Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus*, 1936, vol. I, p. 7. See Herodotus, V, 78, and the praise of Spartan *isokratia*, V, 92;

also VII, 101ff.

¹¹⁶ These are probable inferences from Diogenes Laertius, ix, 50, where it is said, following Heraclides, that he "gave laws to Thurii," an Athenian colony founded in 443 B.C.; and from Plato, *Protagoras* 314-315, where the sons of Pericles appear among his pupils.

¹¹⁷ Jaeger, *Paideia*, I, bk. 2, ch. 3, contains a fine appreciation of Protagoras, which however is not blind to the limitations of Protagorean humanism; see especially pp. 298-299.

tradition has it, he was prosecuted and found guilty under the same Athenian law that later was invoked against Socrates.¹¹⁸

The world at large remembers him best for his relativism, with its famous watchword, "Man is the measure of all things." What precisely Protagoras meant by this radical-sounding formula has been subject to much dispute. At its maximum, it would leave each individual the infallible determiner ("measure") of his own "truth"; at its minimum, it involved the repudiation of a discoverable objective truth valid for all mankind. Our most responsible account of the Protagorean relativity, particularly as applied to ethical problems, is contained in certain sections of Plato's *Theaetetus*. From what is there said, and also from a related passage in the *Cratylus*, it is clear that in strict theory Protagoras had committed himself to according equal truth to the opinions of all individuals. "What seems true to each man really is true for him."¹¹⁹ It is equally clear, however, that the disruptive social implications of this theory were hedged about by Protagoras himself, at the cost of consistency, with a conservative identification of justice and holiness, for any given community, with what "seems" just and holy to that community, that is, with its laws and customs. His first task as educator, therefore, was to make his pupils "better" in terms of the accepted norms of their own states.¹²⁰ When, as fully educated participants in political life, his pupils should advocate modifications in the existing laws, then, on Protagoras' assumptions, no question of just or unjust need (or, strictly, could) arise to trouble them. The proponent of such a change must urge his case on grounds of "advantage" to the state, if adopted, the new law will both seem and be just.¹²¹ Thus Protagoras could avoid collision with

¹¹⁸ Fr 4, Diels, *Vors.*, 1922. For the charge of atheism, see Nestle, *Vom Mythos zum Logos*, p. 278, and esp. pp. 480-481. The chief ancient source is Diog. L., ix, 54, 55, 51.

¹¹⁹ *Theaetetus* 170 A, *Cratylus* 386 A.

¹²⁰ *Theaet.* 167 A-D, cf. also *Protagoras* 318 E-319 A, taken in conjunction with 326 C-D and 328 B. It should be noted that this view would make the state—any state—the custodian of its citizens' consciences, a conception which, when he thinks he has discovered it in Plato, stirs Popper's deepest indignation.

¹²¹ *Theaet.* 167 C, 172 A. The allusion at 172 B to those persons who "are willing to affirm that none of these things [i.e., just and unjust, holy and unholy] exists by nature or has an essence of its own," Cornford interprets as referring not to Protagoras and his followers, but only to those thinkers mentioned immediately afterward, "who do not argue altogether as Protagoras does" (Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*,

1935, pp. 81-83). But two considerations make substantially against this view. (1) at 172 A, in a passage admitted by Cornford (p. 89) as "genuinely Protagorean," justice and all other moral and religious values are equated with whatever any state may choose to decree, a position in substantial accord with the opinion of those who deny that justice has a nature and an essence of its own, and (2) a passage in the *Cratylus*, 386 A-E, in language closely resembling that of our disputed sentence, presents the Protagorean position as involving the denial that things such as virtue and vice have a fixed essence according to which they naturally come to be. To my mind the least difficult assumption is that Plato intended to put Protagoras in a group whose common property was the denial of a "natural" justice, or objective standard of moral validity by which laws could be evaluated. The members of this group, however, were marked by specific differences, some of them, like Protagoras, following tradition

traditional opinion within any community he honored with his presence, and without recognizing the existence of any absolute moral norms, could practice his profession of improving his pupils and their several cities by offering instruction in how to manage effectively both private and public affairs, and to speak persuasively on either side of any question.¹²²

But in the thought of Protagoras, as we know it, a more basic inconsistency remains. Not only does Plato attest and offer objections against his relativism; he also attributes to him certain doctrines impossible to bring into accord with the basic tenet of moral relativism, and far more acceptable in consequence to a thinker like Plato, who maintained the objective reality of a universal standard of human good. Even in the *Theaetetus* there is perhaps some hint of this, when Protagoras is shown describing those advantageous new laws which a wise public speaker will cause to be enacted as instruments for inducing his city to hold more truly "wholesome" opinions concerning what is just, and is heard comparing the activity of such a speaker to that of the physician, who really knows how to produce better health, and therefore more healthful perceptions, on the part of his patient.¹²³ We cannot tell whether or in what direction Protagoras thought fit to develop this analogy. Clearly there is nothing in the analogy itself to prevent the identification of political health with such nonmoral goods as prosperity and power. But that it may carry suggestions of a wider and more spiritual significance, implying the existence of a standard of moral value, is shown by the ethical use to which Plato himself puts it in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*. It is in Plato's dialogue the *Protagoras*, however, that we find positive indications that Protagoras did sometimes appeal, by implication, to objective moral standards. True, the dialogue contains important elements avowedly relativistic; there is the little speech in which the sophist seeks to escape from the logical clutch of Socrates through the side-door of the merely relative truth of all applications of the word "good" (334 A-C), and, prior to that, there is the approving description of the typical civilized community indoctrinating its young citizens in its own mores and in its traditional laws, "invented by good lawgivers of old" (325 C-326 E). It is observable, however, that even in this latter passage there is a strong implication of an underlying quality common to all communities, though present in unequal degrees, and serving as a criterion by which they may be distinguished and

in regarding the institutions of the state as genuinely binding upon its citizens, while others, like Thrasymachus, regarded moral prescriptions as mere devices whereby the ruling class enhanced its power. In effect, then, Plato is saying: Protagorean relativity leads logically into radical immoralism. Protagoras stopped short of the abyss; others have plunged into it.

¹²² It seems to me highly probable that

Protagoras, in announcing his relativism, was not interested in developing its epistemological consequences, but that, like Gorgias (see p. 154), he philosophized in the interests of his rhetoric, employing philosophical arguments in refutation of the rival claims of philosophy, to clear the ground for the practice of his essentially nonphilosophical art.

¹²³ *Theaet.* 167 B-C.

preferred to the condition of the wild men of Attic comedy (327 D) Most striking of all is the evidence of the myth which Plato ascribes to Protagoras, here we are told that in primeval time, Zeus bestowed upon all men individually some share in the basic social virtues of *dike* and *aidós*, justice and reverence (322 C-D) There are thus provided in the generic nature of man (as we have seen in an earlier chapter) theoretic grounds for the discovery of a moral code binding upon all men, independent of the "seemings" and diversities which characterize the experience of particular communities and their individual members The consequences of this element of his thought, had Protagoras followed them home, would have made of him in many respects a Platonist before Plato, and would have forced him to abandon his relativism and his comfortable impartiality as between all opinions about right and wrong It is perhaps this unresolved conflict among his views, as they have come down to us, that has tempted several modern interpreters to construe him into consistency by assimilating him to their own philosophical outlook ¹²⁴

Popper appears to be a case in point Out of the fifth century Protagoras whom we have just portrayed, he has constructed a much improved modern thinker under the same name In absolute antithesis to a backward looking Plato, hidebound in rigid adherence to tradition, this neo Protagoras is presented as the forward looking sponsor of a high ethic, "critical dualism," according to which "man the moral being" superimposes "norms upon the original or natural state of affairs," and creates institutions "not natural but conventional," institutions for which "we are responsible," and which therefore, we may change Popper further credits Protagorean theory, in thus justifying changes in social practices, with the intention to "improve things," which in Popper's terms implies the aim of developing societies progressively more democratic, more individualist, and more humane The same implication attaches to the title Popper confers on the sophist "theorist of the open society" This admirable Protagoras is the forerunner and spiritual kinsman of that other and still greater "critical dualist," Popper's Socrates And more than this, Popper assures us on several occasions that Protagoras' ethical position was founded on a sincere religious belief From the myth we have just mentioned, with its machinery of gods and demigods, Popper concludes that the self announced agnostic Protagoras believed "God to work through man," and that 'the laws, which are our making, are made with the help of divine inspiration' ¹²⁵

¹²⁴ For example, F C S Schiller the Oxford humanist hailed him (chapter II of his *Studies in Humanism* 1912) as the daring founder of the pragmatic method itself capable of yielding objective truth measured in terms of publicly shared values and Paul Elmer More saw him (*Hellenistic Philosophies* 1923 pp 325-327) as the

antithesis of what he More approved and made of him the major prophet of a radical moral skepticism

¹²⁵ The quotations in this paragraph are assembled from Popper's discussions of Protagoras on pp 61 65 67 132 180 181 and 509

There is a certain element of humor in this situation, arising not simply from the extravagance of the claims, but rather from the curious circumstance that what is intended as a furious attack on Plato displays itself, when the necessary corrections are made, as a profound compliment to him. For the Protagoras whom Popper bids us admire owes most of his authentic substance to that aspect of Protagorean doctrine which Plato presents sympathetically, as we have seen, in the early part of his dialogue *Protagoras*; and to put the matter shortly, it is not possible to separate the Protagoras of this particular section of the dialogue from Plato sufficiently to permit of glorifying the one without according simultaneous and substantial honor to the other. Whoever will study the views there expressed in comparison with Plato's thought in many of the other dialogues, up to and including the *Laws*, will find a truly surprising measure of agreement.¹²⁶ We recommend to our reader the rereading of our earlier presented brief summary of the myth from Protagoras' speech by way of illustration of this point.¹²⁷ The basic ideas that without the virtues of justice and reverence no community, however technically competent and abounding in warlike strength, can long endure, and that albeit in unequal degree, all men must participate in them and live lives guided by their fundamental rule — these ideas no reader of Plato can fail to recognize as inseparable components of his thought. The mythical description of the two virtues as the gift of Zeus is matched by Plato's genuine conviction that the human soul has a divine element, and that laws, though of man's making, are rightly made only in conformity to a divine paradigm. Platonic, too, is the notion of the entire community as educator; though Plato would regard the value of the education as dependent upon the quality of the moral standards to which it conformed. Plato, and Socrates as well — witness the *Crito* — would concur in regarding the laws of the Greek cities as the primary vehicles of moral instruction for their citizens, and as expressions, in the main, of traditional wisdom. And in considering this parallelism, one will do well to remember, in justice to Plato, what Shorey has so well said: that there is no reason to attribute to anyone other than Plato himself, "the wealth, the refinement, the concatenation of the ideas and the systematic composition of the whole." Popper shows some marginal awareness of the similarity between the views he ascribes to the two men,¹²⁸ but has all but totally obscured it in his zeal to convert Plato into the contrary of that which he approves.

Between the historical Protagoras and Plato there remain, indeed, vital points of contrast, rooted in the Protagorean denial of objective truth. But Popper has brought us no nearer understanding either man. It is surely unhistorical to see in Protagoras a pioneer in the advocacy of responsible improvements in the legislative structure of a state, when, since at least Solon's

¹²⁶ See Paul Shorey, *What Plato Said*, p. 124.

¹²⁷ See p. 217 above.

¹²⁸ Popper, n. 27 to ch. 5, p. 516.

time, such activities had been a conspicuous feature of the Athenian political landscape. Conceiving Protagoras as a forward-looking progressivist, Popper has failed to note the sophist's appeal to ancient and traditional wisdom, and his consistent failure to espouse any program of social values as *per se* more worthy of furtherance than any other; to this extent Popper is endorsing a thinker committed to a strict moral neutrality between communities of such opposing characters as, say, an "open" Athens and a "closed" Sparta. In his assimilation of Socrates to Protagoras, Popper has expunged from the record the notorious opposition between the Socratic quest for valid and universal knowledge of the moral good, and the Protagorean assumption that no such knowledge is possible. By ignoring Protagoras' explicit agnosticism, Popper has been enabled to equip an eminently secular relativist with a spurious halo of sanctity. Not only has he lavished upon his favorite merits supposititious and, in the ancient world, as yet unborn. He has also glorified Protagoras at Plato's double cost, bestowing upon him much that has every right to be thought Plato's own, and according to Plato only the usual misunderstanding and abuse. Protagoras may have his laurels; but they need not be filched for him from another's crown.

Morally equivalent to the putting of leading questions to a witness is the practice of making an author say what you want him to say by selectively emphasized quotations. This is what our adversary has done for the sake of raising the illusion of an extreme modernity in the ethical outlook of Democritus, that near contemporary of Socrates, whose fame as advocate of the atomic theory, and builder of a materialistic world scheme in which causal determination holds universal sway, has for most readers obscured his importance as among the first of the great philosophers to address himself to ethical problems. Out of the mass of fragments which unhappily is all that remains of the vast output of this extraordinarily prolific man, Popper has assembled a little sermon¹²⁹ on the text of humanitarian universalism, in which the several separate constituents, aptly combined, and enhanced by occasional modernisms in the translation, produce an apparently overwhelming effect. A few examples of this method are in order.

When one reads, "Virtue is based, most of all, upon respecting *the other man*" (italics ours), it is difficult not to feel that we are listening to one of our contemporaries. But when one examines the original, he sees only the statement that "Reverence (*aidôs*) is that which chiefly comprises virtue," a sentiment noble enough in itself, but scarcely a novelty in Greek thought.¹³⁰ And now,

¹²⁹ Popper, pp. 180-181.

¹³⁰ Fr. 179 (Diels). The appeal to *aidôs* occurs frequently in Homer (e.g., *Il.* XIII, 95), and in a deeper moral sense in Hesiod (*Erg.* 192, 324, 200), not to mention other uses of the term in Theogon and the tra-

gedians. A valuable discussion of *aidôs* in Greek thought generally, as the shame or ruth man feels at the thought of dishonoring himself by a base deed, or by wrong done to those who are helpless (suppliants, strangers, the aged, orphans), will be found

by the sheer juxtaposition of another fragment, with a quite different context, inaccurately rendered¹³¹ as "Every man is a little world of his own," a spurious ethical enhancement is induced. For here the reader is brought to thoughts bordering on a sermon by John Donne, and a piece of cosmological anthropology merges into a mystical Christian awareness of the sanctity of Everyman. Of most of the other ethical dicta that are quoted, we may simply say that so far are they from reading "as if directed against Plato,"¹³² that their spirit and almost their very letter can easily be found in many a Platonic dialogue.¹³³

One citation, indeed, remains, which Plato could not have said without qualification: "Better poverty in a democracy than high good fortune, so-called, under an autocracy, by just so much as freedom is better than slav-

in Gilbert Murray's *Rise of the Greek Epic*, 1911, pp. 103-112. Here, however, some slight injustice is done to Plato. Murray explains that the more intellectual and authoritarian Plato not unnaturally made less appeal to the emotional virtue *aidos*, turning rather to virtues based upon principle and insight, and to civic control of conduct. While there is truth in this contention there is also implied oversight of the many passages in Plato, particularly in the *Laws*, where the same feeling is expressed, some times in the very word *aidós*, sometimes by means of such near equivalents as *aischyne*sthai, or *sebesthai* (e.g., 729 B-C). Plato speaks of "reverencing justice" in one's dealing with the helpless, especially slaves (777 D). See also 729 E and the references given in note 133 just below, for examples of Plato's attempt to protect the helpless in the city of the *Laws* with the aid of reverence and pity, reinforced by religious sanctions, law, and social pressure.

¹³¹ Fr. 34. The fragment says "in man who is a little world (microcosm)," meaning that there is an analogy between the structure of man and that of the macrocosm, and conveying no reference to ethical relations obtaining between one man and another.

¹³² Popper, p. 181.

¹³³ Fragments 41, 62 and 55, 'To refrain from wrongdoing, not through fear but from a conviction that one ought to refrain,' "Good is not merely not doing wrong, but not even wanting to do wrong," and 'Works and deeds of virtue, not virtuous words, should be our concern,' are collectively reaffirmed in the whole purport and substance of the *Republic*, but particularly in Book II.

Socrates is there asked to refute precisely the standpoint that Democritus rejects, the supposition that fear of consequences is the sole consideration inducing man to virtue; he is asked to prove that being just is not merely a prudential alternative that men reluctantly accept only because what they really want (i.e., violation of the persons and property of others), is not consistent with their own security. The superiority, over the mere "word," of the good "deed" and the virtuous intention (Aeschylus' "being rather than seeming good," *Rep.* 361 B) is tacitly asserted in every line.

With fragment 261, "One should to the best of his ability redress the wrongs of those who have suffered injustice, and not permit it to happen" (or "to pass unpunished"), there are numerous parallels throughout the *Laws*, where willingness to intervene in behalf of the victims of injustice is enjoined upon all citizens, and even upon slaves, with particular solemnity in the case of orphans or the helpless aged, see *Laws* 730 D, 880-882, 926 D-928 D, 932 C-D.

To Democritus' injunction (not mentioned by Popper, but well worth our admiration), "Learn to feel far greater shame (*aidos*) before thyself than before others" (fragment 244), there is, to my knowledge, nothing quite equivalent in Plato, though it is consistent with his many expressions of the idea that one ought to honor reason and self-consistency more than public opinion (*Crito* 46 B, 49 D), and with the doctrine expressed in the *Phaedo*, 83 A, that the soul should honor her own conviction and intuition of value.

ery" ¹³⁴ Yet if "democracy" be qualified as constitutional and law abiding, Plato could have given his full assent, in any case he matches Democritus in scorn of worldly fortune bought by subservience to a despot, and when choosing among states existing in his day, ranked democracy of any kind above a government without law, whether exercised by one man or by "the few" But in drawing upon the surviving political fragments attributed to Democritus, Popper is on dangerous ground, the impossibility of reconciling their diversity of standpoint, some of them being sharply antidemocratic, ¹³⁵ has led to doubt as to their Democritean authorship ¹³⁶ It is special pleading to flourish the democratically inspired fragment while leaving unmentioned the existence of fragment 267, that asserts, "Rule belongs by nature to the superior man" Nor should fragment 252 remain unmarked, in which Democritus declares in the strongest terms the preeminence of "the interest of the city over all else," a mode of expression which, when found in Plato, is deemed totalitarian, but which, fairly viewed, may be only an emphatic rejection of selfish interests threatening the common weal

From this discussion we hope no reader will emerge with the impression that he has been reading an attack upon Democritus, the present writer yields to none in admiration for the profundity and versatility of his thought and (subject to the indicated uncertainties) his liberality and humanity of outlook. What has been attacked is, as so often, not the ancient philosopher but the modern critic who has made use of him to improper ends. We know him as the proponent of an ethical ideal in which a certain "tranquillity" (*euthymie*) is identified as the good for man, an ideal which was to be adopted by Epicurus for the chastening of the hedonism of Aristippus, and by him transmitted to its most persuasive advocate, the poet Lucretius, himself a staunch admirer of Democritus. Popper has not made use of what seems to me perhaps the finest evidence of his ethical insight, his impressive admonition, previously cited, "Learn to feel far greater shame before thyself than before others" (fragment 244). This appeal to the sacred self respect of the individual offered a standard and a support to those for whom the sanctions of the human community and of the gods no longer were available.

We approach the end of the roll call of the Great Generation now, if ever,

¹³⁴ Fragment 231. Popper translates (p. 180), 'The poverty of a democracy is better than the prosperity which allegedly goes with aristocracy or monarchy.' The word translated 'aristocracy or monarchy,' and which we render 'autocracy,' is '*dynastai*' a word which sometimes means simply 'rulers' but can also mean 'ruling oligarchs' who possess hereditary and unrestricted power, in Democritus' sentence it plainly has more than a tinge of despotism. (We shall discuss Popper's

reasons for his special translation of this word on p. 461 below.) Plato was far from admiring such forms of government except in the one respect of furnishing a remote possibility of the establishment of the ideal state by the fortunate conversion of one such ruler to true philosophy (*Republic* 473 D).

¹³⁵ Fragments 19, 75, 251.

¹³⁶ Nestle, *Vom Mythos zum Logos* p. 203.

Popper must produce the definitive formulators of the "new faith," whose activity marks the dividing line between the forgivable oligarchs and the unforgivable. Next on the list appear "the school of Gorgias — Alcidas, Lycophron, and Antisthenes," originators of "the creed of the universal empire of men."¹³⁷ Perhaps we should interpose here the comment that the frequent approving references to Gorgias himself, and to the school¹³⁸ might excusably lead the reader to suppose that the latter was the place to which Athenian citizens betook themselves to receive instruction in universalistic humanitarian ethics. A correction is in order.

Gorgias was, first and foremost, a master of discourse, a teacher of the art of persuasion through the medium of artistic prose.¹³⁹ But he left his pupils free to choose their own application of this skill. This will explain what would otherwise be the anomaly that among his "followers" are found men moving in opposite directions. There are, as Popper keeps reminding us, some who seem to have been on the right side of certain great issues of their day, but there is also a Thrasymachus, and perhaps a Critias and a Calicles, who in spite of their profession of contrary principles, have equal right to be classified as belonging to Gorgias' school. The only well-attested positive deliverance of Gorgias himself on a question of political import, was his speech at Olympia, in which, as a Panhellenist, in glaring contradiction to the ideal of universalism as Popper conceives it, he sought "to turn the Greeks against the barbarians . . . advising them to take for the prizes of their arms not each others' cities but the land of the barbarians."¹⁴⁰

Of Alcidas we have already spoken.¹⁴¹ Except for his classic sentence against slavery, nothing significant remains. Lycophron denied the claims of birth (as did Plato), and spoke importantly, as Aristotle indicates, of the state as guarantor of mutual justice, although incapable of supplying moral education to its citizens.¹⁴² But what further elements, if any, were included in his theory, cannot be reliably determined. We do not know whether either man was in Athens during the greater part of the period in question, nor whether ethics and politics were among their central interests. With Antisthenes we have previously dealt at length.¹⁴³ It will be remembered that we found in him, as in Socrates and in Plato, an ethic applicable in principle to any man, but along with the outline of this ethic, the fragments attest an equally cordial repudiation of democracy, not acknowledged by Popper, and show no championship of that broadly conceived "brotherhood of man," which Popper has ascribed to him. Leaving out of our present concern his nominalistic materialism, we should be hard put to discover any originality of doctrine. One might

¹³⁷ Popper, p. 180.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 149, 560, 562.

¹³⁹ See p. 154; cf. also p. 337.

¹⁴⁰ Quoted from Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.*

ist. I, 11, by Jebb, *Attic Orators*, 1893, vol. 1, p. 198.

¹⁴¹ See pp. 141-143, 155.

¹⁴² See pp. 146-167, 418-424.

¹⁴³ See pp. 202-215.

committed himself to no metaphysics: his "theory of individuality (or of the 'soul,' if the word is preferred) is . . . a moral and not a metaphysical doctrine." By it, he is reminding us that "there is . . . in man a divine spark, reason; and a love of truth, of kindness, humaneness, a love of beauty and of goodness."¹⁵⁴ In view of all this we may speak of "Socrates' advocacy of the autonomy of ethics . . . expressed especially in his doctrine of the self-sufficiency or autarky of the 'virtuous' individual";¹⁵⁵ we may call him a "critical dualist," "who felt compelled by his conscience as well as by his religious beliefs, to question all authority, and who searched for the norms in whose justice he could trust," or in a more familiar vocabulary, "perhaps the greatest apostle of individualistic ethics of all time."¹⁵⁶

To the truthfulness of some traits in this depiction, to the humanity and sincerity of the entire man, one can take no exception. There is even a sense in which one might agree with every single part of the whole. But, on the other hand, it is also fair to say that there is a sense in which the whole thing is wrong, wrong as our author (*me judice*) so often is, in an eminently coherent and systematic way. To illustrate: we agreed with Popper when he listed among the attested characteristics of the historical Socrates his habitual admission of ignorance, with its twofold implication of intellectual honesty and critical caution. But it was without our knowledge and consent that this undeniably Socratic trait should be supposed to have entailed for Socrates what it has come to imply to the modern mind, the recognition of the equal validity of other points of view. By joining this "ignorance" to the practice of spiritual midwifery, as applied by Socrates to all comers, including a slave, Popper thinks he has gone far toward establishing his view of a nonauthoritarian, equalitarian Socrates, inspired with a democratic regard for the opinions of all others, and a willingness to treat their opinions as naturally the "equals" of his own. Need it be said that no text is available to document this preview of nineteenth-century ethics? The Socrates preference for suffering rather than dispensing injustice has been subjected to a similar transmutation: for Popper this is the supreme exhibit of Socratic individualism, that a man should so love and value the interests of others that he would prefer to suffer at their hands rather than to infringe the sanctity of their individual rights. This Socrates, so modest intellectually, so morally determined, has now been made fully ready for the act of dying "for the freedom of critical thought" and for "free speech" itself, "for the right to talk freely to the young," or in order to attest his "loyalty to the state, as well as to democracy," as Popper has arranged for him to do, on later pages.¹⁵⁷ It is a wind blowing from the same quarter that has inspired what we heard Popper say about Socrates and "souls." No good "critical dualist" should have a soul. But if, by any chance, a critical

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 509.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 67, p. 127.

¹⁵⁷ Popper, pp. 188-189, 601.

dualist, otherwise in good standing, is overheard talking about a soul, well, fortunately there are devices for explaining that away.

In fine, Popper's Socrates has been washed in the waters of modern liberalism until every odor of his historical Greek origin has been removed. He has been put into modern dress, and would now be mistaken, at a distance, for the author of "A Free Man's Worship" or even for Jean Paul Sartre; or, most plausibly of all, for Popper's ideal self. But how such a projection could find something solid to identify itself with in the original Socrates, we have now to explain.

As a first approximation, we may say that what permits Popper or anyone else to make so fair an initial show of evidence supporting his case is just that duality or polarity in the personality and thought of Socrates which figured in our earlier discussion under the name of "incongruity."¹⁵⁸ The perennial charm and the perennial problem of Socrates lies, I believe, just here, in his most distinctive and baffling gift of seemingly breaching logic by attaching to himself what, when listed separately, appear as contradictory predicates. Is he a lonely spirit, given to mystical abstraction? Yes, and also the most eminently social of human animals. A great commoner? Yes, and an aristocrat of the intellect. The satirist of the popular religion, and its most pious practitioner; modest in his claims to know, but believing himself to possess the only key to true and universally valid knowledge; anarchist, putting his devotion to his "mission" above the command of the laws, and yet believer in the divine right of the personified Laws of his native city to his unqualified obedience, even unto death; — and the list of apparent contradictions could be further extended.

We can join Popper in finding in the *Apology*¹⁵⁹ and in various of Plato's "Socratic" dialogues, clear and ample evidence of the intellectual modesty of Socrates, his dissociation of himself from those self-styled experts whose conceit of knowledge had never subjected itself to critical inspection. We confirm, also, his attribution to Socrates of a genuine interest in promoting enlightenment, awakening the moral consciences of all who came in his way, citizen and foreigner. In such "sidewalk talks" and in his interviews with the artisans (*Apology* 22 C-E), there is a certain flavor, at least, of what Popper has called "equalitarian," a suggestion of the common touch. Nor can we doubt that the man who chose the alternative of suffering injustice to that of inflicting it on others, was expressing a humane ideal, consistent with the highest ethical conscience of the race. And finally, we will cordially agree that in refusing to

¹⁵⁸ See pp. 33-34 above.

¹⁵⁹ An arresting interpretation of the *Apology*, according to which Socrates made no actual speech, and the great speech we possess is from first to last a product of Plato's dramatic imagination working upon his

memories of his conversations with his departed master, is considered on p. 632 below, together with a brief statement of our reasons for not dealing at length with this challenging hypothesis.

abandon his calling as teacher and public conscience at Athens, or, when condemned, to avail himself of the proffered opportunity to escape, he sealed his career in the true blood of martyrdom.

But as our indication of the Socratic polarity has taught us to expect, we can find other things as well. We can find in the *Apology*, along with the disclaimer, a more fundamental claim to know. The skepticism of Socrates reveals its granite foundation in an unshakable, a dogmatic conviction that there is a divine law or standard set for human reason to discover, and that by taking earnest and careful thought man is not merely employing a "medium of communication," as Popper would have it, but is pursuing an appointed way leading by successive steps nearer to knowledge of the true end which all men seek. We find no hint that this divinely sanctioned good is for Socrates identified with human action and its free principles of choice, as on Popper's interpretation it should be. On the contrary, it is an objective referent, and though Socrates is willing to suggest that it may be very close to human consciousness, revealing itself in dreams and oracles and, for him personally, in the inhibiting admonition of a "divine sign," it is certainly not conceived as either the creation of human aspiration or as deriving its authority from a mandate issued by the rational will of man. It speaks, and we listen, though, Socrates would insist, we must be actively intelligent listeners.

The *Apology* shows us, accordingly, a Socrates who, despite his asserted ignorance, claims to possess already the ground plan of the most important knowledge. He knows and proclaims the universally valid schedule of values which sets soul highest and body and wealth below (29 E ff.); he has no hesitation in asserting the dependence of the soul's well-being upon its achievement of moral good (29 B-E); he is convinced of the justice and benevolence that run providentially through the universe (41 D), in happy accord with the moral interests of man. He is confident that those who are able to confer moral benefit upon the young are not the many, but the few experts, perhaps even the one expert (25 B-C). And through his whole defense he shows no scruple in presenting himself as the uniquely competent, the perhaps irreplaceable man (28 E f., 29 D ff., 31 A-B), whom the god has selected for the improvement of the city.

If we turn to the *Crito*, we find again not the message, "Each man of us, whoever he may be, must make his own decision," but rather the appeal to the moral expert, and the implication that the expert will be recognized by his consistent enunciation of the same doctrine (46 B). Again the call for the one who knows is hedged with the proviso, if there is such a man (47 D), and again the proviso is then quietly dropped, and Socrates proceeds, as if he had himself, through reason, access to truth (48 A), affirming, as in the *Apology*, the primacy of moral goods and the certainty of their cosmic validation.

The *Gorgias* repeats with more assurance the self-same teaching. As in the *Apology* we had a Socrates determined to benefit the citizens whether they

would or no, so here we have a Socrates who conceives of statecraft as the moral betterment of citizens by the expert, the trained and experienced physician of souls, a task to be undertaken only by one who has had long practice in the private pursuit of the art (513 E-515 C), and who has arrived at self-consistency (482 A-C, 527 D-E) upon all matters of moral importance. When the Socrates of the *Gorgias* claims to be "the only statesman" whom Athens has produced, it is to neglect the entire context to construe this, with Popper, as meaning that the true statesman is, first and foremost, the man who "knows his own limitations." Every line of the dialogue breathes the moral certainty with which Socrates adheres to his convictions, in the face of what he sees as the radically false opinions of almost all his fellow citizens. The constant comparison of the true political leader with the physician, trainer, and builder, imply the existence of just such objectively valid moral knowledge as the Socrates of the *Apology* proclaims himself almost uniquely to possess. The dialogue is an impassioned call for the placing of none but those who possess this knowledge, and are able to impart its benefits, at the helm of the state.

When Popper interprets Socrates' preference for suffering rather than dispensing injustice as evidence of altruistic individualism, he is neglecting the actual Socratic argument, and has drawn his conclusion from the mere psychological implications of the *probandum*. For Socrates conducts his proof entirely from the side of the interest of the given individual in preserving the health and order of his own soul from the corruptive action of injustice. He is speaking from a standpoint that abstracts from the equal rights and interests of "others," and concerns itself with the "self-regarding" question: Will you, or I, or any man, be ultimately better off for having a corrupted soul? Having answered with an emphatic "no," he can then turn to persuading others to pursue, in the same fashion, each man his own best interest.

If in the preceding, we have protested Popper's discovery of altruistic individualism in the Socratic preference for suffering over doing injustice, this is not because of any wish to deny that Socrates was everywhere displaying a genuinely altruistic interest in his fellow men as individuals. The Socratic attempt to help each man to discover through self-scrutiny a standard of value common to all is very different from what Popper supposes to be his encouragement to each man, in the absence of any such objective universal standard, to make decisions for which he is individually responsible. The discrimination of these two standpoints is of great importance from every point of view, and basic to a right reading of Plato's relation to Socrates; in this connection it will reënter our discussion at a later point.

One further correction should perhaps be made in Popper's interpretation of the Socratic paradox concerning injustice. Popper speaks of Socrates' refusal to "inflict" injustice upon others, and shortly after, presents him as including among the highest human virtues, "humaneness" and "kindness." If there is in these phrases the suggestion that Socrates enjoined pity for those

who suffer pain, correction is in order: there is no text for such an attribution. To punish wrongdoers appears to the Socrates of the *Gorgias* (469 B) as "unenviable," but the elimination of suffering is not indicated as any part of the urgency that inspired him; the evils of the soul — ignorance, injustice — were what he sought to cure.

New wine is again poured into old bottles when the motivation of the Socratic martyrdom is found in the furtherance of free thought and free speech. True that Socrates in the *Apology* is demanding what we may call his freedom to follow the dictates of his conscience against the authority vested in his judges; but it is very important to notice that Socrates does not think of it as a freedom at all. For him it is only a necessary disregard of a human authority, entailed by obedience to a divine command. The suggestion that he is here demanding freedom not merely as a personal right but as a general human right is even less tenable. Is it thinkable that a man should die for the sake of a principle that he neglects to mention? Would he not have said that it was not he alone whose rights were in question, that his protest was rather against the larger unwisdom and injustice of silencing anyone at all, however different from himself, who might arise among the Athenians to teach new doctrines or to speak out in favor of unpopular causes? Clearly, neither his own "freedom" nor that of others is here in question.

Nor can we follow Popper in his reading of the *Crito*, which he interprets as Socrates' attestation of his unbounded loyalty to democracy. Here the contestants are, one may say, an innocent individual, tempted to protect his own material interests at the cost of an illegal act, and the ideal city of Athens, represented by its personified Laws, claiming unqualified obedience from those whom she has bred and reared, and who have accepted her protection. And, as all the world knows, Socrates in his decision subordinated the individual to the social order. He finds the highest good of the individual in justice, which demands of the citizen (where obedience to God does not conflict) his reverent cherishing above life itself of the orderly institutions of his own city (*Crito* 50 A-53 C). There is no suggestion that Socrates regards the laws of Athens as more binding upon an Athenian than are the laws of other states, even "oligarchic" ones, upon those have been born and have chosen to remain their citizens; there is even commendation of Crete and Sparta, of Thebes and Megara, as well-governed (*Crito* 52 E, 53 B). Neither in the *Apology* nor in the *Crito* is there any praise of the democratic form of government. In both dialogues there is expressed reprobation of the lawlessness, irresponsibility, and false values, of "multitudes," in assemblies or in courts of justice (*Apology* 31 E-32 A, *Crito* 44 D, 47 E-48 C). Furthermore, there is an outright inconsistency between the depreciation of wealth and material interests, voiced by Socrates in the *Apology* (29 E) and attested by all our other knowledge of his life and teachings, and the conception of Socrates as the banner-bearer of an Athenian democracy which, as Popper insists, included among its essential

traits commitment to the twin ideals of commercial enterprise and naval imperialism. And thus we are brought to the conclusion that we can accept neither a Socrates-Voltaire who would die in preservation of any man's right to disagree with him, nor a Socrates dying because of a particular esteem for Athenian democracy as such.¹⁰⁰

There is a further consideration making against Popper's Socrates, as the man who lived and died the humble advocate of equal rights for the opinions of all, who in any other than an ironical sense believed himself ignorant of all ultimate moral and religious truth, and who was therefore the thoroughgoing individualist and democrat. This is the singular circumstance that these traits appear not to have been reproduced or taken into account by any of his disciples. Among the fragments of Antisthenes there are preserved no echoes of such beliefs; Popper himself makes no claims to have found here the needed confirmation. The same could be shown to be true of Aristippus. And it is therefore possible that Plato's "treachery" was not to the historical Socrates, but to the modernized version only.

But even though Popper's Socrates were ten times more historical than he is, we still cannot allow him to be used as a measure of the level of toleration which Plato should have attained. For Popper's Socrates has been derived almost entirely from Plato's depiction of him in the *Apology* and *Crito*, whereas Popper's Plato is primarily the architect of the Republic and the city of the *Laws*. And in contrasting the libertarian Socrates with the authoritarian Plato, Popper has not allowed for this fact; in neglecting the very different conditions under which they are being observed, he is violating a basic canon of scientific method. We will, of course, agree that it is not possible, as Popper has clearly seen, to use the Socrates of the *Republic* as a reliable informant as to the views of the historical man, since we have no means of purging him of his Platonic increments. But it is none the less indefensible to neglect the fact that we see the unadulterated Socrates (if we see him anywhere) only as he stood accused and in opposition to the existing state of affairs, as a private citizen in the actual city of Athens; and it is unsound to infer, from what he then said, what he would have prescribed had he faced the problem of drafting an ideal polity.¹⁰¹ We may be sure that in it he would have preserved the freedom of anyone who in all earnestness desired to obey the Delphic god. But even here, there was room for different interpretations of the god's meaning, and are we to be certain that Socrates would have allowed any unspecified citizen freedom to interpret an oracle as he saw fit, and thereby perhaps to endanger the

¹⁰⁰ For our replies to Popper's arguments concerning particular passages in the *Apology* and *Crito*, we refer the reader to Appendix XVI. For the relation between the Socratic schedule of values and Plato's allegedly oligarchic hostility to commerce, see n. 215, p. 334.

¹⁰¹ That it would in Popper's view have been possible for a libertarian to describe an ideal polity (largely in negative terms, it is true) is shown from Popper's belief that Lycophron did so, at least in part. Popper, pp. 540-541.

stability of the common life? It is pleasant to imagine the difficulty such a citizen would have encountered in achieving this freedom, had it been made conditional on his ability to defend his opinion against a scrutiny as exacting as any Platonic censorship, namely the Socratic *elenchus*, from whose bourn few travelers ever returned. What would have been the Socratic edict upon atheists, or anarchists, or moral nihilists, must be matter of conjecture only. In a community in which moral belief was, to his way of thinking, sound, in which the common citizens unanimously taught the young to value justice above all else, and taught them, too, that God would watch over them, alive or dead, we cannot know that Socrates would have desired to see the young perplexed by questioning, or would have admitted the teachers of new doctrines. Whether he would even have used untruths for the good of his citizens is uncertain; there is a passage in Xenophon, paralleling Plato's well-known statements in the *Republic*,¹⁶² in which Socrates justifies the medicinal use of lies in behalf of the sick or the insane, and Socrates, as we have seen, took toward his fellow Athenians somewhat the attitude of a physician. In sum, it outruns the available evidence to assert that in his legislation, he would have avoided all Plato's errors.

We should like to close our discussion of Socrates by filling in what seem to us two important omissions in Popper's sketch. There is, to begin with, his blindness to a trait which is very evident in almost all of the Platonic dialogues, and not absent even where one might least have expected it, amid the solemnity of the *Apology* and the *Phaedo*. We refer to that artful mode of self-depreciation to which the name of irony was given by his contemporaries, his constant assertion of his own ignorance as contrasted with the supposed great wisdom of others. For Socratic irony was not simply a source of harmless fun; it was an instrument that he employed in his logical business, a device which he found useful in enticing his dialectical victims. It is absolutely necessary to recognize this for any proper awareness of what is actually taking place beneath the innocently smooth surface of the advancing dialogue, as Popper naturally is, in general, aware. But what is of equal importance — and Popper has given his readers not the slightest hint of it — is this: that irony and Socratic modesty cannot be kept apart, and that, if one may put it so, the irony of the situation is that, though perhaps the irony itself is a little modest, there is no doubt that the modesty is very considerably ironical. Popper's failure to observe this fact may indicate that the irony of Socrates is still in effective operation, and that the latest victim of its deceptive power is Popper.

The second neglected facet of Socrates may be indifferently referred to logic or to ethics; for it is their meeting place. In an earlier chapter of his book, Popper made reference to the Socratic quest for universal definitions of

¹⁶² Xenophon, *Memorabilia* IV. ii. 17; *Republic*, e.g. 331 C-D, 382 D, 389 B

Xenophon, of course, is not necessarily an independent witness.

the virtues, but on the later pages in which he gives his account of the Socratic message as part of the "new faith," this indispensable ingredient has been dispensed with. The result of this omission is unfortunate in more than one respect. By leaving out of view the process of inquiry, with its interest in the pursuit of moral knowledge not yet attained, we may slip easily into the error of supposing that Socrates had a completed message which it was the duty of a faithful disciple simply to preserve. Socrates had, it is true, convictions; but these he did not habitually hail as conclusions. Seeing, then, that in the teaching of Socrates the search for knowledge is usually declared to have been fruitless, and combining this observation with the mistaken interpretation of the Socratic irony as simply modesty, it is possible to infer that the suspension of judgment is what Socrates meant us to recognize as the full maturity of his wisdom, and to proclaim in the name of Socrates a law forbidding any conclusion, claiming to be valid beyond the limits of the individual conscience, ever to be reached. This is to dismiss entirely what a Plato might judge to be the positive core of the Socratic doctrine: the demand that life be rationally examined with a view to discovering objective truth, and that the resulting conclusions be accepted as the bases of belief and act, even as the bases for planning the good community. That Plato honored this demand in his treatment of his master's teaching, according to his full lights and best conscience, is at the least a defensible interpretation.¹⁰³

We have come to the end of the list of the "Great Generation," and we must

¹⁰³ Bowra (*Ancient Greek Literature*, 1933) has this to say (p. 169) of Plato's relation to Socrates: "Plato's view may be partial, but he cannot be suspected of distorting the truth." And he adds, "For Plato, Socrates represented all that mattered in life, and to this ideal philosopher he pinned his faith, pursuing his course with consistency from youth to advanced old age." This passage, interestingly enough, is taken from a book which Popper has included as first in a group of authors who, as he says, have expressed "similar views of Plato" with his own. It is entirely true that Bowra's appraisal of Plato is not without some sharp disparagements which resemble Popper's; e.g., he deplores (p. 187) the rigorous punishments and inquisitorial discipline advocated in the *Laws* (we have sought to meet this criticism, pp. 351f., 355ff.), and finds himself tempted at times to regard Plato's transcendentalism as "a lifeless mirage" and his arguments as "based ultimately . . . on fear" (p. 189). It is these judgments to which Popper has exclusively appealed. But when we read Bowra's account as it

should be read in its organic entirety, Popper's omissions become as intelligible as they are indefensible. The truth is that the great part of the exposition is devoted to celebrating Plato's intellectual and moral virtues in glowing terms. Thus we are shown Plato adopting his life's mission: "He must follow his master and try to make men better." "Plato purified and sublimated the simple faith of his master and identified the end of the good man's life with the attainment of absolute truth" (p. 178); the great myths "convey a picture of man's place as a moral being in the scheme of things." In the *Republic*, "the ethical doctrines of Socrates are taken to their logical conclusion" (p. 181); Plato, "starting from the conviction that power must be combined with justice," depicts an "ideal ruler . . . perfectly given to the service of the state"; "in his anxiety to be perfectly fair," he sets out an uncompromising ideal, "no matter how impracticable it may seem" (p. 182). In such utterances Bowra would seem to have quite disqualified himself as Popper's ally.

now summarize the results of our inspection. We have thus far been required to concern ourselves so closely with discounting exaggerated claims that our recognitions of positive contributions may have lacked an emphasis which we propose now, in summarizing, to supply. What, then, were the modes of thought and feeling, truly valuable in whole or in part, which Popper has claimed for the thinkers on his list, but which Plato was not able to accept, or to which he accorded, for whatever reasons, something less than their due?

Taking our start with Pericles, we can but regret that so many of the fine aspirations of the Funeral Oration were so little possible of admission into the circle of Plato's beliefs. To us, the Periclean definition of Athenian democracy, with its confident assertion that all citizens are capable of sharing the task of rational decision, and able, by virtue of their "happy versatility," to turn readily from immersion in their private lives to undertake the public business of politics and war, appears as a sort of prophetic vision of our own political faith. We too are committed to the temper of "live and let live," that forbids "sour looks" cast at our neighbor when he deviates slightly from the beaten path. And we are perhaps even a little too prone to share the Periclean enthusiasm for the splendor of wealth and power, and to agree with his tacit presupposition that civilization and material prosperity are related to each other in no merely accidental way. In short, it would not be possible to formulate the essential assumptions underlying the somewhat differently organized institutions of our own culture without an implied approval of much of the contents of this classic speech.

So much Popper can justly claim, and by so much Plato must be diminished. But from this point on we have found little substance in Popper's report. For the truth is that only the Periclean ideal among Popper's whole list of new and shining ethical insights comes through the ordeal of critical inspection substantially uninjured. Herodotus, as we saw, adds nothing to the purpose. Protagoras has suffered what is in Popper's terms the humiliating experience of having been found in agreement at some important points with the "historicist" Plato; where he differed, it was not to propose progressive norms of conduct, but to accept those which he found in use, as proper for the community which imposed them, except where considerations of utility might justify a change. His priority as a "critical dualist" has been lost with the disclosure that the term itself is a misnomer when applied to a traditionalist such as he. The most fertile theme in his thought, his epistemological relativity, escaped neither Plato's appreciation nor his censure; but it was not in itself an ethical message; and in so far as it was not part of the ethical teaching of the period, it is not here in question. Democritus, again, was set over against Plato exclusively in the character of moralist, in an antithesis which our argument was able to convert in large part into a harmony, citing parallels from Plato's text to show how far, despite his materialistic metaphysics and his ethic which dispensed with divine sanctions, he has gone toward agreeing in

morals with the great idealist Plato. Of the others we need hardly speak, or of the oft-repeated tale which, under examination, turned out to be almost a ghost story: Alcidas, the man of one noble fragment, Lycophron, surviving only in agreement with Plato's scorn of noble birth, and as the recorded announcer of so brief a form of the contract theory of the state that it offers almost no restrictions on the freedom of conjecture as to what he "must" have meant. Antisthenes adds nothing reasonably well attested which goes beyond that part of the teaching of Socrates which he adopted, except what we may admire in his increased emphasis upon bodily exertion and moral force. As to Socrates himself, Plato is best understood as the passionate advocate of all that he conceived his revered teacher to have believed. In so saying, we are not, of course, denying that Plato reserved the right to grow. But even growth, for him, lay in the direction in which he believed Socrates would have gone. Popper's "new faith," after Pericles, has turned out to consist in part of a few scattered insights which Plato did not share, plus a far larger number which Plato fully honored, refined, and sent forward upon their way.

Another fact has also become apparent from our discussion. The thinkers whom Popper has chosen to honor are either men whose opinions are in large part unknown, or men who can be shown to have entertained, side by side with their approved beliefs, others which, if they had been mentioned by Popper, he would have had to count as illiberal or even oligarchic. Like Plato, these men are not made up according to the strict recipe of democrat or oligarch, but display in their thought elements which we are unable fully to accept, along with those for which we honor them. On any reasonable basis of choice, Plato deserves a high place among the great men whom Athens produced in her time of intellectual greatness, and himself contributed and championed many of its most admirable ideas.

We turn from talk of individuals to the use of larger terms — the Athenian democracy, and the empire. But at bottom the issue is the same: our opponent will be selling democracy dear and buying Plato cheap, as part of a single operation. Let us, as our habit is, hear first his argument. The grounds on which it chiefly rests will be familiar to us from the earlier discussion of the oligarchs and of Thucydides.

The democracy is first of all, as we know, the protagonist of the open society, the very opposite of the reactionary oligarchs: it is inevitably, therefore, the party of trade, the navy, and the empire.¹⁶⁴ That it is also, for Popper, the very heart and glowing center of the essential Athens, we may learn from the fact that on a single page Popper employs interchangeably the expressions "Athenian democracy," "Athens," and "the Athenian people, the demos." These terms are thus endowed by their employer with an almost mystical ca-

¹⁶⁴ Popper, p. 173.

capacity to contract or expand, not without serving the practical purpose of excluding from consideration the interests and excellences of the nondemocrats. This denial of the minority rights of the Athenian "oligarchs" becomes on occasion the denial of their very existence as Athenians. The demos is Athens, and one who like Thucydides is said to be (as we have seen above) "a friend neither of the . . . demos . . . nor of its imperialist policy," is *ipso facto* declared disloyal: "his heart was not with Athens, his native city."¹⁶⁵

Athens, Popper complains, has been represented by the historians, under the influence of the partisan Thucydides, as "a ruthless democracy, a place ruled by the uneducated, who simply hated and suppressed the educated, and were hated by them in turn. But this view . . . makes nonsense of the known facts, and above all of the astonishing spiritual productivity of Athens in this particular period."¹⁶⁶ The period is the first decade of the war with Sparta, a period which did show a great flowering of Athenian genius, some of the flowers being left over from the Periclean age, others springing up for the first time, like Thucydides and Aristophanes. Popper does not call to his reader's attention any other decade, or the suppressions or persecutions which occurred in this very decade, but leaves his comment to stand as a characterization of the state of affairs which obtained at Athens throughout the time in which the democracy ruled. The democracy is thus credited with having provided the necessary conditions for the free flowering of the Athenian culture in the fifth century, and with having maintained relations of mutual cordiality and respect with the Athenian "educated."

There follows a defense of the Athenian empire, chiefly on the ground that "it is necessary . . . to see that tribalist exclusiveness . . . could be superseded only by some form of imperialism";¹⁶⁷ the Athenian empire, therefore, we conclude, is to be regarded as a historical necessity and a force making for an even wider "open society"; it is to be judged solely in terms of its degree of enlightenment compared with other empires, particularly that of Rome, and in the light of what it "might have" developed into. As examples of enlightenment he cites Athens' abstention from seizing the "cultural possessions" of her subjects, and her offer of equal citizenship to the people of Samos in 405 B.C. He celebrates also the novel imposition, in the year 413, of a 5 per cent duty on all the seaborne exports and imports of the cities of the empire instead of the former tribute. As a result, Popper declares, "the Athenians became interested in the development of allied trade, and in the initiative and independence" of the allied cities. (Since he cites no evidence of this interest, we may suppose that he is reasoning in terms of the expectable long-term results of such a policy, rather than reporting an actuality; yet he uses the indicative mode.)¹⁶⁸ On such grounds, he refers to the dominance of Athens as

¹⁶⁵ Popper, p. 173.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

¹⁶⁷ Popper, p. 176.

¹⁶⁸ Bury, *History of Greece*, 1931, p. 486, is apparently Popper's source for this praise of the change in Athenian financial meth-

merely "temporary," and hails the empire, "with its possibility of developing into a universal empire of man."¹⁶⁹

In diametric opposition to this empire, he sets Sparta, whose methods in foreign affairs are characterized under six headings as (1) "tribalism and arrestment," (2) the banning of humanitarian ideologies, (3) "autarky" or independence of trade, (4) "particularism" or refusal to "mix with inferiors," (5) "mastery" or domination over neighboring states, and (6) restriction on the size of the city itself.¹⁷⁰

And now by a truly spectacular example of that complete mastery over the meaning of the word "democracy" of which we have earlier spoken, Popper apparently reconciles two contradictory propositions in the assertion that, far from having lost the Peloponnesian war as a result of its own dangerous weaknesses, the democracy (a) was deprived of victory only by the treachery of its oligarchs, and (b) won the victory. This last he supports by the fact that democracy was reestablished by the peace which followed the reign of the Thirty Tyrants, as the Athenian form of government. "It had proved its superior strength. . . . Nine years later . . . the Athenians could reërect their walls. The defeat of democracy had turned into victory."¹⁷¹

Finally, in his account of the condemnation of Socrates, Popper condones the prosecutors on the double ground that they intended only "to prevent him from continuing his teaching," not to put him to death; and secondly, because, though "they well knew" he had not intended what his oligarchic pupils had done, "they could hardly regard" his teaching as "otherwise than as dangerous to the state."¹⁷²

Fortunately, the case for Plato does not depend upon a blacking out of the glory that was Greece and the brightness that was Athens. It depends rather upon the ability of his apologist to show that there was a point of view that could be taken by a man of intelligence and good will, from which the splendor of Athenian democracy appeared heavily overcast, and that Plato shared that point of view. To establish this contention it is neither necessary nor desirable to appeal to the so-called verdict of history. In what follows we are preparing to remain within the historical space-time in which Plato lived and to answer

ods, but Bury says of it, with proper historical caution, that it "might" tend toward the conversion of the empire into a more mutually advantageous institution. For the early abandonment of this much-heralded fiscal change, see p. 321 below.

¹⁶⁹ Popper, pp. 177-178.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, same pp. In attributing this trait to Sparta, Popper makes illegitimate use of a sentence quoted from Plato's *Republic*, in which Plato prescribes this limitation of size for his ideal city; Popper's

use of this sentence implies that it may be taken simply as Plato's description of a Spartan policy. This is an example of that circular method by which Popper, having shown to his own satisfaction that Plato's ideal city is essentially similar to Sparta, then draws upon either one to supply unattested characteristics of the other. Cf. our n. 59, p. 98; n. 23, p. 510; n. 101, p. 511; pp. 563, 567-568.

¹⁷¹ Popper, p. 187.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 183.

Popper's criticism in the light of the events and circumstances of Plato's own experience.

In our earlier discussion we saw how Popper has admired and praised the Athenian commerce-navy combination as the leaven which cracked the cake of custom and made possible the "open society"; and we argued that this may well be true, and yet that a man might value the old pieties and the old hardihood, and dislike what seemed to him the new scramble for gain and the new oppression, without forfeiting his claims to moral decency. We wish now to leave the immediate plane of ethics and explore this same situation from the point of view of the economic interests which created conflicting groupings among the Athenian citizenry, in addition to those two, trade-hating oligarchs and trade-favoring democrats, of which we have heard so much.

Commercialism as the joint cause and consequence of the Athenian empire must indeed have seemed to many an Athenian statesman or voting citizen an excellent good thing. We remember how Pericles had implied his cordial approval, and how even the dour visage of the Old Oligarch had relaxed into a smile at the thought of the material advantages that ensue. The hum and stir of shipyard and factory made a brave music in the ears of the city-dwelling Athenians and their near neighbors, the men of the Piraeus.

But there was another class of citizens, by no means negligible in numbers, though in general they lacked political cohesion and influence as a group, to whom the new prosperity was a mixed blessing, destined to become a misfortune. These were the landowners of Attica, a far more numerous class than from Popper's account it would be possible to guess, and by no means principally composed of wealthy aristocrats, masters of large estates. Attica was, more than most Greek states, a country of small farmers,¹⁷² of the sort so vividly typified for us, with comic exaggeration, by their spokesman of genius, Aristophanes, in the person of the genial grumbler, the long-suffering, hearty, down-to-earth, indomitable Dicaeopolis. Aristophanes shows him to us as he was in the first years of the war, cooped within the walls of wartime Athens and longing for the war to end that he might resume the joys of rural life. Perhaps the interests of a Dicaeopolis and of his fellow farmers large and small might have been compatible with the mercantilism of the new age, but only in so far as that mercantilism was itself consistent with a public policy which permitted long periods of peace, or at any rate provided protection from widespread and continuous devastation of the rural areas. But under the policy announced by Pericles for the conduct of the Peloponnesian war, it was prescribed that the whole outlying population of Attica should retire within the safety of the walls, leaving the enemy free to carry out, unopposed and year

¹⁷² The following account of the rural element in the Athenian state is based in the main on insights derived from Thucydides, esp. II, 14-16; from Glotz, 1926, espe-

cially pp. 245-262; from Heitland, 1921, especially pp. 41-53, 48-50; from Aristophanes, especially the *Acharnians*; from Gomme, 1945, p. 9.

We are, in short, suggesting that it is undemocratic to talk of "Athenian democracy" and its interests while excluding from consideration the economic welfare of some one thousand large landowners and some twenty-two thousand small farmers, the greater number of whom were unable, in the circumstances, to continue making their living from the soil. Popper has been showing us the ancient analogue of the New Yorker's map of the United States, with its exaggerated seaboard and its conspicuously absent prairie states. When we restore proportion to the picture we can begin to feel a sympathy extending beyond the sphere of trade and naval enterprise, and to recognize as legitimate parts of the social landscape the blank places on Popper's map. We may even come to view as falling on the hither side of treason the objections felt by the wealthier citizens, whether landowners or merchants, to being crushed under the ever-mounting burden of war expense, just as, at the other end of the economic ladder, we gain a more realistic grasp, and see the natural necessity, of the motives that guided the poorer citizens to vote themselves maximum advantages at the assembly. We are brought, then, to understand that it is a gross simplification to explain the disruption of Athenian civil unity as due exclusively to the malign influence of a few "old devil" oligarchic landowners, die-hard supporters of ancient privilege, who constituted the collective snake in an otherwise paradisiacal, commercial-naval, wholly public-spirited, democratic Athens. Surely if one is searching for explanation, he will be more likely to stumble upon something to his purpose in the tug and pull of vital interests, affecting large numbers of citizens, than in the "demonology" that Popper has introduced.

We have just seen that it is doubtful practice to identify the Athenian democracy with the commercial and naval policy, unless one specifies exactly what one is including within the term democracy. Similarly, it is partly a terminological problem to determine how far one may validly go in calling the great flowering of Athens in the several decades following the mid-century, the product of Athenian democracy. If we are using "democracy" in the narrower political sense to denote the advocacy of government by what was, in effect, the city-dwelling *demos*, such a statement is more than questionable. It would be a difficult assignment to establish a correlation between devotion to this political ideal, and degree of cultural productivity. We are forced, then, to speak in broader terms. And when we do so speak, we are obliged to put high on the list of the cultural immortals the names of the "conservative" Sophocles, the "waverer" Euripides, the "skeptical" Aristophanes, and the "oligarch" Thucydides. It is a fair penalty exacted from those who, like Popper, have drawn narrow party lines, to discover to their chagrin that they have seriously impoverished their party and enriched the opposition.

If it be objected in reply that it was in any case Athenian political democracy which made possible all this free cultural expression, including what was reactionary within it, we must protest that this is to mistake the part for the

whole. We must not forget that government by the Athenian demos was not interchangeable with that far wider and richer thing, the living body of Athenian beliefs, traditions, and institutional practices, which trace the clear line of descent at least as far back as Solon. The literature, the moral ideals, the plastic imagination that astonish the student of the Athenian fifth century, are the results, under democratic auspices, of that larger complex. We may go further and assert that the demos itself, in what concerns cultural life, is also its living product, schooled in political understanding by its elder statesmen, the aristocratic proponents of democracy, in the meaning of art and drama by the cumulative effects of decades of exposure to the creative products of a great tradition. But when Plato formed his earliest impressions of Athens, the tremendous urge of the Athenian upswing was slackening; he could well have felt that its energy had been inherited from that earlier epoch, and that evils which had been latent in the system from the beginning had now come to full development. Plato reached manhood in a time when the evidences of Athens' decline were inescapable. Her very existence she owed to Spartan forbearance; the rebuilding of her walls she owed to Persian gold and the calculating Persian desire to keep Greeks in check by means of other Greeks.¹⁷⁶ Plato even witnessed, in 389, the repetition on a small scale of the shortsighted mistreatment of Athenian allies in a revived Athenian league of cities, by Thrasybulus, the hero of the restored democracy.¹⁷⁷ True, Athens was still the "school of Greece," but in a much slighter, more academic sense than Pericles had intended. To Popper, from the vantage-ground of the twentieth century, it is clear that the principle of democracy was destined to renew and vastly to extend its triumphs in the modern world. To an observer standing where Plato stood, and knowing democracy in the form it then displayed, it might well have appeared that, on the contrary, democracy was only the unchecked rule of the least competent, and that what needed preservation was rather the way of life of that older Athens, with its traditional virtues deepened and extended and clarified in the light of the philosophic insights of the great age, insights which, for him, had been made possible by Socrates.

And what of the record of the Athenian people for supporting and tolerating the great men of the great age, or freely permitting the dissemination of new ideas? It is certainly true that Athens gave scope and appreciative reward to artists and thinkers, statesmen and generals. The Parthenon was built, the plays were performed and applauded, the sophists were attracted from the far corners of the Greek world. Pericles was kept in office for many years. But this sunlit picture, in the interests of fidelity to its original, requires some shadows. There were also dangers to which intelligence and a disposition to liberal thought *ex facto* exposed their possessors, dangers threatening also all persons

¹⁷⁶ Cambridge Ancient History, V, p 364; VI, p 49

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, VI, p 52-53

conspicuous in the public eye whose policies or acts might chance to incur the disfavor of the public will.

When in the Funeral Oration Pericles uttered those famous words in praise of Athenian toleration for citizens who wished to go their own way, he had not yet himself experienced to the full Athenian capacity for violating that great principle. His political enemies apparently were those chiefly responsible for the legal harassing of his friend, the sculptor Phidias. The legal persecution of his venerated teacher in philosophy and intimate friend, Anaxagoras, however, was actively assisted by the religious intolerance of the ordinary Athenian, shocked at the impiety of the godless thinker who in looking up at the sun and moon beheld stone and earth where piety saw gods. Pericles had also to endure much malicious slander directed at his domestic life and relations with the noncitizen woman Aspasia, whom, as a result of his own law, he could not marry; he might almost have been describing such slander when he spoke of "sour looks, which though they do not injure, are yet unpleasant." Real harm was threatened in the capital suit for impiety brought against Aspasia, whom he was able to save only at the cost of a personal appeal before the court. And to crown all, he suffered in his latest year at the hands of that demos whose political freedom he had done so much to advance, the humiliation of a demotion (later reversed) from his position of command, and the indignity of a trial on a charge of embezzlement, with the imposition of a heavy fine.¹⁷⁸

We see in all this — and other comparable cases are written into the record¹⁷⁹ — how dangerous it is to treat the demos and free-thinking democracy as synonymous terms. To cast doubt upon the existence of the city's gods or to neglect their worship was ground both for public suspicion and for legal prosecution. That the bringers of such suits mingled political motives with religious sentiment shows only that the latter was strong enough to be serviceable to the purposes of those who exploited it, at the same time revealing the close relation the ordinary Athenian conceived to obtain between his city and its traditional gods — between enmity to the one, and denial or disrespect of the others.

For an outstanding example of the intensity and virulence that could result from a full working partnership between political suspicion and religious animosity, we must consider the mysterious case of the mutilated Herms, which still awaits its definitive solution. Whether it was but a midnight frolic of young blades "sworn with insolence and wine," or in some oblique and obscure way

¹⁷⁸ Plutarch, *Pericles* 35.

¹⁷⁹ Diagoras the atheist was convicted of verbal impiety and condemned to death *in absentia*, a price being set on his head, in about the year 415; Protagoras, according to a widely accepted tradition, which, however, Burnet questions (John Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, I, p. 117), was prosecuted

for expressing doubts whether the gods existed or not, and copies of his book burned by the public executioner in the market place. There existed a law forbidding atheism or the teaching of astronomy, on which these prosecutions were grounded. See Nestle, *Vom Mythos zum Logos*, 1942, p. 479.

a symbolic act perpetrated by oligarchic enemies of the democracy, or the outcome of some yet more hidden motive, we shall perhaps never know. What we do know is that the responsibility for the desecration was laid at the doors of those to whom irreligion could plausibly be imputed, to the well to do, the social group to whom association with the sophists had attached in many minds the suspicion of godlessness. Information was unearthed against a club of men suspected of oligarchic leanings, and a plot to overthrow the democracy was inferred therefrom.¹⁵⁰ The incident grew to serious proportions, with consequences that reverberated for years in the political mind of Athens. And in the process it made very clear the sinister element in the exacerbated democracy. For men were put to death on the flimsiest of evidence, and a military expedition of the first magnitude was deprived, when actually in operation, of its ablest leader, whom the same demos had appointed. In the lurid light of such ways of conducting public business, the democracy did not show to its best and soberest advantage, and citizens of means were warned of the danger in which they stood, should any occasion for suspicion arise against them.

We see, then, that the demos did, in a way, hate and distrust the "educated" sufficiently to make insecure the very lives of prominent Athenians who might attract their suspicion or displeasure. Numerous instances could be displayed in which lesser public displeasure resulted in banishment or fining of generals or ambassadors who failed to achieve the successes expected of them.¹⁵¹ It is clear that the picture of an Athens where the "educated" were hated and suppressed, though not true *simpliciter*, is not "nonsense." It was, in fact, sufficiently true to affect seriously the sense of mutuality in Athenian political life. After 411 B.C., when the revolution of the Four Hundred had given the democratic sympathizers in their turn reason to fear for their lives, the natural reaction expressed itself in the so called "democratic terror," and no one who reviews the record of confiscations and banishments arising, often enough, from mere or even merely alleged association with the antidemocratic regime, will be moved to style that appellation a complete misnomer. These abuses, it is true, were greatly exceeded by those of the second oligarchic revolution yet to come, for which in their turn they had sowed the seed, and in consequence the general reader of Greek history is apt to be almost unaware of their occurrence, and thus tends to fall the more easily into an uncritical idealization of the democracy. The situation had become one in which there was little trust or sense of civic unity to be found anywhere. It is not without significance in this connection that Euripides, whose sympathies after about 421 B.C. had become alienated from the trend of Athenian democracy, accepted the invitation of the Macedonian tyrant Archelaus and removed himself permanently from the Athenian scene.

¹⁵⁰ C.A.H. V p. 324

¹⁵¹ C.A.H. V p. 245 Thucydides p. 351

Anytus (who however escaped by bribery) VI p. 51 Andocides

The fate of the generals after Arginusae is a grim reminder of this loss of civic unity. A really substantial naval victory had been won. The generals in charge had dispatched two officers to rescue those Athenians still alive aboard the disabled vessels and to gather up the bodies of the dead, when a sudden storm (so it was maintained) rendered their mission impracticable. We need not repeat in detail the whole of the distressing tale. What needs to be stated here can be briefly told: six generals, men of high standing and credence, against whom no substantial case had been made out, were deprived of their constitutional right of separate trials, and, after a certain Socrates the philosopher, who chanced to be the presiding officer on that day, had refused to put the illegal question to the vote, were nevertheless collectively condemned to death by his majesty the people of Athens. One of the condemned was the son of Pericles; two others were men whose services to the cause of democracy, both Athenian democracy and Samian, had been outstanding. It was the possession of power such as this and the disposition to use it, when crossed in its purposes and under the sway of passion, as a lethal weapon against those who had fallen from its grace, that justified many thoughtful men in likening the demos in action to his reputed opposite, the tyrant in power.

Here we may briefly raise a question not directly confronted by Popper,¹⁸² but compellingly germane to the interest of any thoughtful friend of free and democratic government. We have just seen that the Athenian law sought, unsuccessfully in the case of the Arginusae generals, to interpose some safeguards between the demos and the individual who had excited public indignation. But it is equally important to ask whether this same law provided any protection for individuals or groups who were dissatisfied with the existing institutions and wished to introduce changes looking to some further limitation on the direct power of the demos. What, if any, opportunity existed for even the most moderate opposition party to urge by orderly legal methods a change in the constitution?

After the revolution of 411, with the introduction of a compulsory oath taken by all citizens to support the existing democracy, and in view of the prevailing suspicion and hostility against all oligarchs or near oligarchs, such a possibility plainly did not exist.¹⁸³ But even apart from this, dating probably from the time when the court of the Areopagus was shorn of its powers as guardian of the constitution, there was included among the basic laws of Athens the "*graphê paranomôn*," whereby whoever introduced a measure believed to be contrary to existing law was open to indictment, and in sufficiently serious cases, liable to the death penalty. This provision, which served many a harmless and useful purpose,¹⁸⁴ had in it also the potentiality of dis-

¹⁸² Popper assumes at one point in his argument that Athenian law was freely open to revision; see our p. 640 below.

¹⁸³ *Cambridge Ancient History*, V, p. 349.

¹⁸⁴ See Grote, *History of Greece* (condensed), 1907, pp. 323-324.

couraging effectively the introduction of measures of reform. Concrete evidence of the operation of this principle as a defense against constitutional change is largely lacking, but it is arguable that its general effect must have been in the direction of driving into the conspiratorial underground all serious advocates of substantial change.¹⁸⁵ There is thus reason to believe that Athenian democracy would have been saved some of its excesses and would have gained in inner security and concord, could it have found some alternative way of safeguarding the legal foundations of its power.

In introducing his defense of the Athenian empire, Popper has disclaimed any intention to justify the evils or brutalities incidental to its beneficent activity, mentioning certain "wanton attacks" of which it has been held guilty, but rendering the phrase innocuous by the instant qualification, "if such have occurred." We wish to tear away this hypothetical screenwork and take a glance at the methods of compulsion employed, not wantonly but from calculation, in the maintenance and extension of Athenian imperial power, methods the harshness of which was of course intensified by the chronic state of war. Two examples will suffice. In the fourth year of the struggle with Sparta, Mitylene, one of the supposedly free allies, as distinct from subject cities of the Athenian empire, attempted with the promise of Spartan aid to break away, and was finally induced to surrender after a siege which had been exceedingly costly to the Athenians in pride as well as in pocket. At the assembly held to determine the fate of the captured city it was voted, on Cleon's motion, in order to dissuade other cities from revolting, to put to death all men of military age, and sell into slavery the noncombatants. On the following day the matter was reconsidered at a second meeting of the assembly and by a very narrow margin the vote was rescinded. The ship bearing the revocation of the original vote arrived at Mitylene barely in time to stay the execution.¹⁸⁶ The Athenians thus, by good luck and on second thought, were able to withdraw their condemnation of these many thousands of persons. But the narrow margin by which the more merciful proposal was carried shows that even on the second day a number amounting probably to several thousand Athenian citizens were still willing to follow Cleon's cold-blooded policy. This incident displays also

¹⁸⁵ Instances of the application of this law in the fifth century apparently are few, being limited to its use, or attempted use, on behalf of persons threatened with illegal prosecution, or against a measure introduced in the assembly without due formality. See Bonner and Smith, *The Administration of Justice from Homer to Aristotle*, I, pp. 225, 265-266, 267. But in 411 B.C. it was felt necessary formally to suspend it before the measures constituting the new oligarchic government were openly proposed; obviously, therefore, it was re-

garded as a formidable barrier to constitutional change (*Cambridge Ancient History*, V, p. 328). In the fourth century, it degenerated into a source of nuisance suits brought against prominent politicians. But the fear of being suspected as an "oligarch," if one should propose such a measure as the restoration of the Areopagus, was still alive in the fourth century, as is evident in the cautious tones of Isocrates, *Areop.* 58ff.

¹⁸⁶ *Cambridge Ancient History*, V, 213-218.

one of the unfortunate features of the Athenian democratic system, which put such decisions in the power of a large popular assembly liable to be swayed by the tempestuous eloquence of a Cleon.

But the outstanding example of the self-regarding coercion underlying Athenian imperialism is undoubtedly the notorious Melian incident, the Lidice, one might say, of the Peloponnesian war. In its simplest terms, here was an application of the imperialist principle in its most ruthless form, "*Obedite aut obite*"; and the latter alternative, having been chosen, was remorselessly enforced: the male population executed, the women and children sold as slaves.¹⁸⁷ "The Athenians" were "on the whole the most humane people in Greece," as Grote has truly said; but, Grote also acknowledges, "humanity, according to our ideas, cannot be predicated of any Greeks."¹⁸⁸ Against the background of these two episodes, one may marvel at Popper's ability to believe that the ordinary Athenians were so "tenderhearted" that they were "on the verge" of abolishing slavery.¹⁸⁹ In both cases we see the subordination of any regard for mutuality of interests within the empire, or for human rights, to the absolute ends of Athenian prestige and power.

But quite apart from evaluation of the specific evils of his favorite imperialism, Popper has quietly provided a principle designed to atone for them in advance. It is assumed, of course, that the overcoming of tribalism is an eminently justifiable end; imperialism, it is asserted, was the "only" means thereto; it is now the servant of that end, and as such endowed with full moral authority. It has become a necessary organ of historical advance. Now, this is an extraordinary doctrine to emanate from the man who has shown no mercy to the historian Meyer for adopting a form of this very principle. Meyer, it appears, had expressed his scorn for the "flat and moralizing evaluation" of those who judge "great political undertakings with the yardstick of civil morality." This Popper declares to be an obvious piece of Hegelianism, a form of historicism, and as such condemned by the whole gravamen of his book.¹⁹⁰ By what warrant, then, can Popper justify his own practice when he gives a right of eminent domain to Athenian imperialism to pursue its way untroubled by the yardstick of the moral standards with which Plato had measured it and found it wanting? One may ask how Popper would judge the case of some contemporary political "democracy," with perhaps a creditable colonial record behind it, which should today declare its aim of forcibly uniting the nations of the world into one community under its benevolent hegemony. Could he consistently refuse allegiance to this forward-looking program, pre-

¹⁸⁷ *Cambridge Ancient History*, V, p. 281.

¹⁸⁸ *History of Greece*, 1907, p. 436.

¹⁸⁹ Popper, in making his modest list of admitted defects in Athenian imperialism (p. 176), includes recognition of the existence of slavery at Athens, but apparently

overlooking the Athenian practice of selling into slavery conquered populations, hastily reminds us again in a footnote (p. 586) of his unshaken faith in a popularly supported Athenian abolition movement.

¹⁹⁰ Popper, p. 586.

senting itself as the "only" way of superseding "nationalist exclusiveness"? And were he to yield to the understandable, even creditable, impulse of rejecting this crocodile claim to historical necessity, would he not be owing something of an apology to Plato?

Enough has perhaps been said already of Popper's defense of the empire on the ground of the supposititious interest taken by the Athenians in the "initiative and independence" of the allied cities, as a consequence of the duty imposed upon goods transported by sea by these cities. In the face of the centralized control by the Athenian assembly and law courts of the conditions under which the affairs of the empire should be carried on, this reference to "independence" is in any case a curious way of expressing the idea of the Athenians' assumed active concern for increasing the volume of allied trade. What Popper has contrived to convey to his reader is the image of the Athenian empire in the likeness of a mutual benefit society, holding out to its free members security and numerous other attractive features in return for a modest contribution. It is almost superfluous to remark that an invitation to join was quite as mandatory as the payment of the duty. And it is significant that only some four years after the duty was imposed, it was under fully democratic auspices withdrawn, and the tribute reinstated.¹⁰¹

Popper's further defense of the empire is conducted largely in terms of two comparisons, the first with Rome, the second with Sparta. He objects against the historians of antiquity in general, especially his disliked Meyer, that they have failed to observe the superiority of Athenian imperialism to that of Rome. Now it is hard to imagine that Popper is really asking us to blame Plato for the lack of clairvoyance. But the fact remains that the discussion manages to imply that it was blameworthy for a contemporary to have failed to observe the liberal quality of Athenian imperialism which he, Popper, has demonstrated by means of a comparison with Rome.

Nor is the contrast as clearly indicative of Athenian liberalism as we are asked to believe. To suggest that it was highly creditable to the Athenians to abstain from the later Roman practice of shipping home the "cultural possessions" of conquered cities, is to forget that Athens was already well supplied with that species of owl. As to the offer of citizenship to the people of Samos, it may well have been a "very interesting instance" of a political invention;¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ See Merritt, Wade-Gery, and McGregor, *The Athenian Tribute Lists*, II, 1949, p. 45, and III, 1950, p. 363. These same scholars also offer evidence (pp. 364-365) to show that the Athenians continued, into the latest days of their empire, to regard themselves as the sovereign determiners — and chief beneficiaries — of the uses to which the imperial revenues should be put.

¹⁰² Popper, p. 586, complains of the in-

justice of Meyer's failure to "credit . . . the Athenians with a constitutional invention of the first order," and of his giving the credit to Rome for a less liberal form of it. But that is to shift the issue from the question of political history and action to one of political theory. No one doubts the primacy of the Greeks, particularly Athenian Greeks, in this latter domain. We were, however, asking quite a different question.

but it will not greatly help the Athenian democracy to a reputation for true, practicing liberalism. It should, first, be remembered that a very special intimacy obtained between the Athenian democracy and the citizens of Samos, dating from the time of the oligarchic revolution of 412-411, at which time the Athenian fleet, headquartered at Samos, had sponsored an overthrow of the Samian oligarchs, and having established the rule of the native democrats, had entered with them into a solemn compact of mutual support. And the desperate eleventh-hour gesture of offering them the citizenship was heavy with tragic irony. This bid for the continued favor of her last ally against Sparta, on the eve of her collapse, was the beginning of a policy which, undertaken in time, might have forestalled the disasters that now brought it to this futile birth. For universalism in the area of citizenship was precisely what the Athenian demos in its prosperous times had been most determined not to permit. We have seen that Pericles himself had supplied the narrow exclusiveness of the Athenian citizenship with a legal base. From that time on, the hard and fast line was drawn between those of pure Athenian blood, the superiors and hereditary rulers, and those who were disqualified by even a trace of the impure blood of any other origin. And this line the Athenians had with difficulty been able to bring themselves to breach even in isolated instances when disaster overtook them. If we are in search of seasonable advocates of equal rights for citizens of the allied states of the empire, we shall have to turn to the chronic satirist of the new democracy, Aristophanes, whose *Lysistrata's* advice we have already heard. A comparison between the Athenian demos and this mouthpiece of conservatism would disclose the advantage in liberalism to be on the unexpected side.

Bearing more immediately on Plato's political opinions is Popper's second comparison, that between Athenian imperialism and Spartan "methods in foreign affairs." As will be seen by a glance at the earlier given tabulation,¹⁹³ the first two, together with the last, of his six methods, are not primarily matters of foreign policy; number (3), independence of trade, while it may be so in some respects, was, in the case of Sparta, aimed more at securing simplicity of living than at influencing the affairs of other states, and hence was, by intent, domestic, like the first two. Taken together, these four add up simply to Popper's unfavorable description of the Lysurgian constitution of Sparta. They are not properly a description of her foreign policy. Numbers (4) and (5), refusal to mix with inferiors and domination of neighbor states, respectively, are not points of contrast between Athens and Sparta. They are actually common features. Our text has already had occasion to underline Athenian pride in racial purity and refusal to grant parity of citizenship to those not born to it. This and Athenian domination over neighboring states were basic rules in the book of the Athenian empire. The completeness with which they were enforced

¹⁹³ See p. 311 above.

left little to be desired, as the names of Antisthenes and of Melos (strange pair) will serve to remind us. Sparta's actual foreign policy, if Popper had chosen to describe it, was not endearing — witness the imposition of close oligarchies of Spartan choosing on cities of the former Athenian empire, after the Spartan victory in 405 B.C.¹⁹⁴ Plato would be open to criticism had he approved such methods, but he did not; which is perhaps why, in describing Sparta, Popper chose instead to point to Lyscurgean provisions which he believes he has established as being favored by Plato.

At first glance it is not easy to make sense of Popper's assertion that Athenian democracy won the Peloponnesian war: that to represent this war as ending in 404, when Athens capitulated, is in fact a "distortion," "for the democrats fought on"; and that in the end, as we have reported above, they turned "defeat . . . into victory." One gasps at this deft juggle that seems to twist history to its purpose. But on second thought, what has happened becomes quite clear. Popper has fused the war of Athens against Sparta with the struggle between the Athenian democratic party and the Athenian oligarchs. He views them both essentially as efforts of the democratic way of life against the advocates of the closed society. And he judges the success of both by their outcome, the date of this outcome to be chosen arbitrarily by himself, and the influence of coöperating causes of the success to be neglected.

Now, we can admire, with Popper, the heroism and devotion to the cause of popular government displayed by the Athenian democrats under Thrasybulus, who ended the oligarchic rule of terror. We can share Popper's deep disapproval of the Thirty and their bloody and short-sighted regime. We can rejoice with him that the democratic form of rule was reestablished and proved itself, on the whole, so moderate in its conduct. And we can accept his judgment that within Athens itself the moral victory rested with the upholders of popular government. But we need not join him in his blindness to the defects and therefore also to the failures of Athenian democracy. We can look steadily at the fact that the war with Sparta was lost: that the purposes for which Athens entered the war were not achieved, and that after the loss of her empire and the expenditure of much blood and treasure, she found herself blockaded by land and sea, starving, and at the absolute mercy of whatever terms her conquerors should impose. And when these conquerors, after the defeat of the Thirty, for their own purposes permitted the democracy to resume functioning, and when, a little later, the Persians, again for their own purposes, made possible the rebuilding of the walls, we cannot permit this restoration to be called the victory of democracy. Our own confidence in the democratic principle does not require to be bolstered by the mistaken proof that in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., in the form in which it was then embodied at Athens, it enabled its supporters to win wars. Unless we recognize that the Athenians of this

¹⁹⁴ *C.A.H.*, VI, pp. 27-28, 41

period were conscious of having suffered a major defeat, of having lost not only empire but their earlier pride in their national strength and confidence in their national security, we can not understand why Plato and others among his contemporaries could have supposed that democracy, like the unrestricted oligarchy of 404, had been discredited.

There remains one sizeable stain upon the Athenian democratic scutcheon, which Popper has done his desperate best to remove, the judicial murder of Socrates; his condemnation, while it was by no means the unanimous verdict of the court, still serves to remind us of the less liberal component within the democracy. This cleansing is not merely a difficult operation; it is an embarrassment. It requires a tacit retraction of some previously made claims; for manifestly, if Socrates and the Athenian demos that condemned him were both as advertised, animated by the liberal democratic spirit, why, then palpably the trial could never have resulted as it did. And so Popper, in order to resolve the dilemma, has chosen to blame the teaching of Socrates himself, representing his accusers as mild and moderate men, who desired only to exile this teacher of doctrines which they could hardly regard as other than dangerous to democracy itself. Popper's assertion that death was not the penalty sought by the accusers, though he is not alone in the opinion, is rather in the nature of a compliment to their reputation; at any rate, they proposed the death penalty, and no accusers could do more.¹⁰⁵ We need not regard their intended moderation as proved. But for Popper to imply that Socratic teaching could reasonably be regarded as dangerous to democracy is matter for astonishment. The reader may recall the declared judgment of Crossman, earlier quoted, that the mission of Socrates had in fact undermined

¹⁰⁵ Burnet argues in his note on *Apology* 35 e 1-38 b 9 (*Plato's Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates, and Crito*, 1924), and we do not doubt his contention, that accusers who intended only exile were well advised to propose death as a penalty, since in that case the convicted defendant, wishing at all events to save his life, was fairly certain to offer to go into exile as the alternative. But accusers who intended in all earnestness to encompass the death of the defendant had also to propose death. There seems, indeed, no possibility of knowing Anytus' or Meletus' intent. It could be maintained with more reason that the judges of Socrates would have accepted his banishment, had he proposed it (see *Crito* 52 B-C). But three-fifths of these judges obviously preferred to condemn him to death, rather than to permit him freedom to teach; if Diogenes Laertius is to be trusted, 300 of 501 so voted. The remaining two-fifths,

however, have genuine claim to our respect, and to the exoneration which Burnet and, following him, Popper, have sought to extend to the court as a whole and to the accusers.

It appears certain that the condemnation of Socrates, like the earlier attacks upon Anaxagoras and Aspasia, was grounded upon both political and religious motives, the relative strength of which can scarcely be precisely measured. Burnet has insisted upon the essentially political motivation of Socrates' accusers, and it is therefore the more interesting to find him recognizing that the success of their attack was dependent upon the existence among the common citizens of hostility to disturbers of the popular religion. Thus he speaks, in his edition of the *Euthyphro*, note on 2 a 1, of the "accusers of Socrates and the religious prejudices to which they appealed."

democracy, and that his death, however regrettable, was "justified"; no society could be expected to tolerate such exaltation of the search for truth above the necessity of social stability. Now Crossman, one must observe, is true to his own assumptions in so regarding Socrates. On his view, each society lives by institutions which embody and preserve its values; within it there arise individuals with vision to discern values yet unrealized; the tragic choice perennially confronting mankind lies between preserving the old, and permitting the destructive criticism which dissolves the old in order to make place for the new. But Popper has no right to such an argument. To him, freedom of thought and of expression is of the essence of the new, the open society, which once for all provides the institutional framework within which alone humanity can rightly live. To tamper with this basic requirement is, in his own vocabulary, to turn back, and back inevitably "the whole way," "to the beasts" — repression by "brutal violence." By accepting the principle of the death penalty for heretical opinion, the restored Athenian democracy is thus condemned by Popper's own ruling. He has merely withheld the admission from his reader.

We may add that Popper's democracy is not helped by the "proof" that he has offered, that Socrates was himself its staunchest advocate. There is essential incredibility in the combined picture of this Socrates, a devoted democrat, explaining his lifelong devotion with crystal clarity across the centuries to Popper, but failing to communicate it to his democratic listeners; and of these listeners, who, as reasonable men, could hardly fail to see the danger to their humanitarian individualist ideals, which arose from this man's championship of these same ideals.

Let us rejoice in our new freedom from the tormenting complexity of these converging errors, and ask our usual and basic question: how could Plato reasonably have regarded the trial and condemnation of Socrates? To Plato's eyes it must have appeared a subversion of all values. We have seen that Socrates had not figured in Plato's eyes as the advocate of democracy, but rather as its critic. Plato had interpreted his teaching as pointing in the direction of a quite different political ideal. But to Plato, Socrates was none the less the loyal son of Athens, who had made it his life's work to teach humane and universal wisdom to his kinsmen the Athenians and to all others who could receive it. Whether or not a death sentence had been originally intended, the fact remained that in the end agents of the Athenian democracy had invoked and executed the final penalty upon "the best and wisest of the men of that time." By this action they seemed to Plato to have convicted themselves of that veritable ignorance which is wickedness. If he could not accept the oligarchs, whose representatives, the Thirty, had stained their hands with the blood of so many innocent fellow citizens, neither could he accept these "many" who had put to death Socrates. Popper may be able to condone the democratic prosecutors, against his principles, by putting him-

self in their places and thus seeing how Socrates must have looked to them. We must do as much for Plato, if we are to understand how this catastrophic event must have affected his judgment of popular government.

Standing now at the end of our review of Popper's defense of the Athenian democracy, we may conclude with a generalization. Underlying Popper's whole argument is the conviction that opinion has been led by partisan misrepresentation into a systematic error in its appraisal of the Athenian achievement: the world had read "gray" where the true reading was, humanly speaking, "white." We are urged to make this one simple change; then History will be herself again, and all may yet be well. But, as our argument has sought to establish, this reversal will not do. If put to a forced option between the two, we would do better to rest in the conviction that something more solid than "a tendentious distortion" underprops the accepted view that real weaknesses, moral and practical, were inherent in the Athenian version of democracy, and contributed substantially to its overthrow.

All that Popper has told us of the aims and beliefs of the oligarchic party at Athens is presumably designed as a help in understanding the political loyalties to which Plato was predestined by family and class ties, and the dark significance of the party allegiance to which, Popper believes, he had, before he wrote the *Republic*, committed himself. And now he describes for us a Plato who, resolved upon the necessity of overthrowing the Athenian democracy, approves in all essentials the program of the Old Oligarch (as Popper has interpreted it) and of Critias, who had only attempted to carry it into effect.¹⁹⁶ By this one assertion, Popper has identified Plato with the most extreme class of oligarchs, and has attributed to him, one should note, their qualities of treacherous willingness to call in the Spartans and to murder citizens by the hundreds. This Plato, unappalled by "the most ruthless use of violence," asks only the question why Critias failed.¹⁹⁷

The answer that Popper imagines Plato as giving is that Critias had ignored the strength of sentiments, the necessity of wedding people to their chains. Plato saw that this could not be attained by defying the love of justice; on the contrary, "men must be taught that justice is inequality, and that the tribe . . . stands higher than the individual."¹⁹⁸ Thus did Plato anticipate, "perhaps unconsciously, the great secret of the revolt against freedom," the principle of Pareto, which is to present oneself as the champion of all those noble sentiments which one is seeking to destroy; and this aim Plato set himself with marvelous skill to effectuate. Beyond the addition of this new prin-

¹⁹⁶ Popper, p. 190. This is a necessary inference from what Popper represents as the train of thought followed by Plato in contemplating the failure of Critias. We have not wished to burden the reader with

the lengthy quotations of Popper that would be required were we to employ his precise words.

¹⁹⁷ Popper, p. 190.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 190.

ciple, Popper finds nothing of consequence to distinguish Plato from his predecessors in the ugly confraternity of oligarchs.¹⁹⁹ This Plato it would be a misnomer or a euphemism to call a philosopher; he is rather a practical crypto-counter-revolutionist, who directed the energies of a lifetime to framing propaganda, disguised as dialogues, for a new Athenian oligarchic revolution which should succeed where Critias had failed.

But where, we may ask, is Popper's proof that Plato did so ally himself with the Athenian forces of reaction? Where is Plato's proposal for the reform of Athens, the new oligarchic constitution which Plato hoped to see put into effect, the program which "in the political field," as Popper has told us, "added but little to the old oligarchic program"?²⁰⁰ And here we come upon a discovery which is at first sight inherently incredible; yet there is no escaping a conclusion which, for whatever reasons, Popper has not seen fit explicitly to state in this connection: Popper is implying that the *Republic* itself, interpreted as Plato's major expression of the oligarchic faith, was a species of blueprint of the oligarchic political order that Plato hoped that he, himself, might be able to establish in the place of the democracy, at his native Athens. It is not only propaganda, it is itself the program. And Popper is also implying (since, it must be recollected, we have no other sources for such knowledge), that indications exist, in the *Republic* and in Plato's other dialogues, sufficient to prove that Plato would have approved its installation, if necessary, by violent means.

What we have been asked to see is, one might say, an optical impossibility save to an eye in frenzy rolling: to bring together in one view the streets and market places of the real Athens, and the "airy burgomasters," as Milton called them, of Plato's political and philosophic dream. The truth is that we have been finding it more and more difficult to see what Popper has successively asked us to see, as he has developed his panorama of Plato's Athens. It will be remembered how progressively different from our own was Popper's vision of the oligarchs, of the Great Generation and the Athenian demos, and finally of Socrates; and now in the conjunction of Platonopolis and the actual Athens, and of Plato and the Thirty Tyrants, made only more cynically sophisticated, the ultimate disparity is reached.

Popper has not recalled to us explicitly, here in his discussion of the po-

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 190, 193-194

²⁰⁰ Not content with ascribing to Plato the items in the oligarchic creed, Popper has also (note 64 to chapter 10, p. 609) committed himself to the view that "most of Plato's political proposals, including the . . . communism of women and children, were 'in the air' in the Periclean period" and (Popper, p. 193) were those very proposals "against which Pericles had once argued." We are told (cf. Popper, p. 182)

that it is in the Thucydidean Funeral Oration that this argumentation was carried on: "Pericles' speech is . . . a defense . . . perhaps even an attack . . . directed [in part] . . . against the totalitarian ring" at Athens. This conception of the Periclean Funeral Oration as directed against utopian ideal constitutions, complete with communism of women and children, is an airy construction for which no solid foundation is supplied.

litical scene, what he has told us in his earlier chapters about Plato's *Republic*. Undoubtedly, however, he is expecting us to recall the elements upon which he laid such stress in his analysis of the ideal city. If, then, we think back to those earlier chapters, we shall see that these elements, in their out-of-focus fashion, correspond to the items on the creed he has ascribed to the oligarchs of Athens, almost every item having its quasi-equivalent; the one important exception is that in Plato's state alone is found that insistence upon aristocratic birth, as prerequisite to privilege, which, as we have seen, Popper could not consistently ascribe to the Athenian oligarchs in general. It is in view of this formal correspondence, achieved by selective emphasis and distortion, that he has been able to bring his "witch hunt" to its predetermined close, and to identify Plato's "program" with that of the most extreme oligarchs. He has construed the *Republic* as an archaic, an arrested state, the very antithesis of an open society, the bulk of its population degraded into "human cattle," drudging doers of the "dirty work," held to their tasks by a combination of deceptive propaganda and the actual armed might of the race-proud and racially distinct master class; a city aping Sparta and rejecting Athens, self-sufficient, without trade or other liberalizing contact with the outside world, cemented into collectivist unity by the mere contrivance of a state religion.²⁰¹ To clear the way, "clean the canvas," for this new construction, Plato was prepared to "purify, purge, expel, deport and kill. ("Liquidation" is the terrible modern term for it.)"²⁰² And at its head stood a medicine man in the mask of a philosopher, Plato himself, scion of ancient royalty, exclusive master of the abracadabracal nuptial number, by means of which he intended magically to control the destinies of all the inhabitants.²⁰³

Another truly remarkable consequence arises from Popper's assertion that, except for the Pareto addition, Plato's political program contains almost nothing beyond "the old oligarchic program" which he has also described as "the theory . . . of the Old Oligarch and the Thirty." Turning the statement around, we see that the Old Oligarch and the Thirty have been credited with nothing less than the creation in all essentials, of Plato's *Republic*. For however much Popper is prepared to trim away from this work of theoretical construction and analysis, in order to arrive at what he regards as its essential message, he is still leaving it much substance; witness his long description of its provisions, in many a chapter. And now this substance is said to have been contained in the "program" of the Old Oligarch (who, as we have seen, made no constructive recommendations and did not even advocate any action).

²⁰¹ As examples of passages in which Popper makes these assertions, we may here mention for the opposition to change, p. 39; the caste state and "human cattle," p. 52; hatred of the virtues of the open society, p. 117; hatred of trade, p. 87; opposition to naval imperialism and democ-

cracy, p. 182; love of Sparta, p. 47; religious opportunism, p. 140; use of force, note 44 to chapter 8, p. 560.

²⁰² Popper, p. 163.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 150-152. We discuss this notion of Plato's royal descent on pp. 462-463 and the "number" on pp. 450ff.

and in that of the Thirty—presumably their intentions regarding the constitution to be set up after they should have pacified the city. In so doing, he has outrun any documentation which he has made available.²⁰⁴

This picture of a conspiratorial Plato, hardly distinguishable from a Critias, hoping to be summoned at any moment to direct the forcible restoration of his fellow Athenians to the tribal cage, presents us with a perhaps insoluble problem in refutation, except in so far as our entire enterprise achieves a solution. From the nature of the case Plato never had an opportunity explicitly to disclaim it. The best one can do is to bring it out of the midnight atmosphere in which it was generated and expose it to the action of the charities and serenities of Plato's available self-expressions in his writings, from which gradually a different and quite incompatible portrait will emerge. We shall now examine some of the more important passages in the dialogues bearing on the Athenian political scene as Plato knew it from report or at first hand, from Solon up to the time of his own maturity. It will be convenient to arrange his opinions according to subject matter, under the following heads: (1) the assembly, the popular courts, and election to office, (2) the statesmen of Athens and the working of the Athenian constitution, (3) reform of the Athenian constitution, (4) revolutionary violence, and (5) the career of Critias.

(1) The assembly, the popular courts, and election to office. We have earlier referred to Plato's disparagement of the collective behavior of Athenians in their democratic assemblies and courts. His chronic complaint, and the *Apology* and the *Crito* are evidence that Socrates had here set him the precedent, was that these bodies were guilty of fickle and irresponsible reversals of opinion, suggestibility to nonrational appeal, and even of lawless behavior, to the danger of the just man who had chanced to incur their displeasure; and this he might bring upon himself, perhaps, as Plato averred in the case of his master, by his very justice itself. Over the material man and the breath in his nostrils their control was absolute, but they were powerless to affect the true good of a man, which has its inaccessible locus in the human soul.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ The Thirty included Theramenes and Critias, along with others about whom far less is known; of most of them only the names survive. Theramenes is associated with the constitution of the Five Thousand, which, as we have suggested, pp. 343-344, was certainly not that of the *Republic*. Of the constructive political views of Critias nothing survives. He apparently intended to suppress the teaching of the art of discussion (Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, I, 2, 31). Ferdinand Dümmler, in *Hermes*, 1892, p.

260ff., has sought to show that Critias, in his lost *Constitution of the Athenians*, had calumniated Solon and the group from whom some of his (Critias') political opponents were descended, but for all his speculative skill and boldness contents himself with a report of Critias' antidemocratic activities and does not venture into a reconstruction of his positive program.

²⁰⁵ Especially *Apology* 31 E, 34 C ff., and 41 C-D, and *Crito* 44D, 47E-48 C.

In the *Gorgias* the rhetoric commonly employed in the courts for the attainment of the speaker's ends, regardless of truth and in defiance of moral values, is branded a pseudo-art, the deceptive shadow of the true art of justice (463-465). Ignorance is ironically charged upon the Athenian assembly in the *Protagoras* (319 B-D), when Socrates drily infers that this august body must believe that virtue, in the sense of enlightened public policy, can not be taught, from the fact that although only the expert is allowed to speak to issues involving professional knowledge, all sorts and conditions of men are allowed to hold forth upon the larger questions of state. We recall in this connection an earlier adduced passage from the *Republic* (492 B-C), in which the power of the assembly, or other large functional grouping of the demos, to pervert the attitudes and value judgments of the young men is likened to that of a great sophist. What the *Gorgias* told us of the defeating of justice in courts and assembly by the counterfeit presentments of rhetoric, the *Republic* reaffirms; we hear also of the sinister machinations of the political clubs, whereby a man can escape conviction for his crimes. The same criticism of the courts is evidenced in the sharp Hogarthian picture of the shrewdly ready pleader in the *Theaetetus* (172 E), his soul made slavish and stunted by the pressures of the harsh environment to which it has been subjected, practicing his crooked little art of ingratiation (it is hinted that bribes have been given and received) in competition with a "fellow slave," before their common master (the judges) who stands over both "holding some case or other in his hands." It might seem the final proof of Plato's hostility to courts and assemblies that in the ideal Republic, there is no actual or conceivable provision for an assembly, and we can infer from 433 E that he is replacing the Athenian dicastic system with tribunals conducted by the guardians themselves.

We see in Plato's criticism of these inseparable elements of Athenian political life a vindication of that "apolity," abstention from active political participation, which he shared with and perhaps originally derived from Socrates, an abstention in principle from the inequities and unmeaning dangers of the political arena. The attitude finds its most striking expression in the famous simile of the man "waiting out the storm in the shelter of a wall," in *Republic* 496 C-D. It is therefore by no means surprising that in his plan for an ideal polity he should have removed precisely these features which were associated in his mind with the most serious dangers. But from all this unsparing criticism it would be as easy as it would be erroneous to conclude that Plato would have recommended the abolition in the city of Athens or in any other city where ideal rulers were not at hand of popular assemblies and courts. The *Laws* shows us that Plato looked to reformed versions of both these institutions as two main pillars of his reformed state (764 A, 768 A-C, 956 B-958 A). To rid them of their faults, he relied upon the raising of the

educational level of all of the citizens,²⁰⁶ the outlawry of morally irresponsible rhetoric (937 D-938 C), and, in relation to the courts, the enjoining upon the presiding officer of a special duty to restrain those very abuses noted in the *Apology* as frequent in the Athenian courts (949 B). There was, it is true, to be change in the method of selecting the Council which, as at Athens, supplied guidance to the Assembly, and above the popular courts a higher court of appeal was to be added. But with these alterations, Plato was prepared to believe that the popular assembly of all the citizens, and the popular courts, had still substantial contributions to make to the improvement of the life of Greece.

Of some importance is Plato's attitude toward another feature of the Athenian political system, the choice of officials by election. Plato does not regard this practice as typically democratic, in this respect differing markedly from ourselves; to him and to his fellow Greeks it was the lot which characterized democracy. Nor does Plato express disapproval of election, even in the *Republic*. Certainly he does not leave room for it in his ideal city; the guardians are a self-perpetuating body, like many a professional group in our own day. But in any other city, as with the popular assembly and courts, so in the case of election, Plato is its convinced advocate, and believes that ideally all citizens should be eligible to every office, and that all who have not shirked their duty of military service should possess the vote. In the *Laws* he yields to practicality, as he conceives it, by setting up property qualifications for some of the Councilmen and for those competent estate-managers in the service of the city, the City-stewards and the Market-stewards; yet it is on completely open elections that he rests his hope of securing the best men for the highest offices in the state.²⁰⁷

(2) The statesmen of Athens and the working of the Athenian constitution. Here first a word is in order about a man, Solon, who by virtue of his essentially moral approach to the political problem, and his strenuous endeavor to rise above partisan commitments, set Plato a great and, as we shall see, immensely influential precedent.

Holding my shield between, I would not let
This side or that unjust advantage get —

so Solon had, not unfairly, described his own efforts to re-establish Athens on a foundation of social justice.²⁰⁸ There is, in this context, significance in Plato's proper pride in tracing his family relationship with Solon,²⁰⁹ and in

²⁰⁶ The elaborate provisions for public education are laid down principally in Book VII. The laws themselves, however, with their persuasive prefaces, and the festivals, are also to have educational effect.

²⁰⁷ These regulations are discussed again.

pp 344 and 514-515.

²⁰⁸ There is a finely illuminating account of Solon's contribution to the ethics and religion of the city state, in Jaeger, *Paideia*, I. chapter VIII.

²⁰⁹ See pp 261-262 above

the many passages in the dialogues in which Solon's distinction as the Athenian legislator *par excellence* is gratefully acknowledged, or his achievement in poetry celebrated by citation or general allusion²¹⁰ It is interesting, and perhaps an indication of the consecrated status accorded him, that Plato nowhere in his writings debates the wisdom of any particular piece of Solonian legislation, and this is the more significant because, as we shall see, he has actually drawn much from Solon's precedent in framing the *Laws*²¹¹

If now it be asked how Solon appeared in the perspective of the Athenian of the late fifth century, no simple answer is forthcoming The extreme oligarchs, it appears, would have none of him, even spending their energies, when occasion offered, in darkening his memory by inventing tales of his sharp practices By the full time democrats Solon was honored as one of the founders of the democracy, but only as one who had sowed the seeds but had by no means brought to maturity their cherished freedoms This left room in the middle for a group of moderates of either persuasion, as evidenced by the appeal to the name of Solon made in the early stages of both the oligarchic revolutions, by those among the leaders who were seeking the support of citizens of moderate views The name Solon connoted, as part of its public meaning, the conviction that the state could be stably founded upon nothing else than conformity to the eternal laws of the moral order There was also connoted, on the practical plane, the advocacy of firm and impartial constitutional government, with a property qualification for office, but with important powers, exercised through the assembly and the courts, at the disposal of all citizens These powers were, in fact, so extensive that they have been held by most students to amount to effective sovereignty of the state²¹² The Solonian constitution was entirely incompatible with the unchecked rule either of the wealthy or of the well born For this reason, Plato's informed admiration for Solon should go far to show that he was never an extreme oligarch,²¹³ and that except in such a case as the ideal Republic, where ideal rulers were to be provided, Plato was always in favor of some degree of popular control

The *Gorgias* stands as Plato's major indictment of the statesmen whose

²¹⁰ Eg *Laches* 188 B *Republic* 599 E *Laws* 858 E *Symposium* 209 D *Timaeus* 20 E

²¹¹ See n 30 p 514 below

²¹² Cf *Solon the Athenian* by I M Linforth 1919 pp 83-6 If it can truthfully be said that Plato deprived the common citizens in the *Laus* of some powers which Solon had given them it is also true that Plato has compensated for this by greater liberality e.g. in leaving open the highest offices in the state to citizens possessing only the minimum property qualification

²¹³ For a most favorable judgment upon

Solon as man and political thinker the reader may see the chapter devoted to him in C M Bowra *Early Greek Elegists* 1938 pp 73-104 Bowra concludes 'Solon combined a strong belief in individuality with a belief no less strong in duty to the community It is no mere fancy to discern his influence in Aeschylus Sophocles Pericles Among the many good fortunes of Athens not the least was that it produced a man so honest so fair so scrupulous so public-minded as Solon'

acts and thought had laid the foundations of the Athenian empire. It will be recalled from our earlier discussion that the "Socrates" of this dialogue — to the indignation of Warner Fite, who suspects Platonic megalomania, and the admiration of Popper, who sees only the declaration of the true Socrates that none but the man who knows his own ignorance can safely rule — voices his claim to be the only proper statesman that Athens has produced. Though we do not accept Popper's interpretation of Socrates' meaning we need not deny that Socrates himself may well have expressed, in his own less vehement way, ideas which Plato has here elaborated, in condemnation of the materialism and moral indifference of the political leaders in question. But from the form and content of what is said we can hardly resist the inference that the criticism has been made Plato's very own. What the Platonic Socrates is demanding is the recognition of the priority, one might well say the absolute sovereignty, of moral goodness in all the arts, including especially politics and its pendent art of rhetoric. The only rhetorician or statesman that Socrates will accept is he who sets as his aim the moral betterment of the citizens. Callicles, answering Socrates, is prepared to admit that "our contemporary" politicians (the dramatic date of the dialogue is 405) fail to pass this test, but puts forward as satisfying the Socratic demand four of the greatest names in the Athenian record: Themistocles, Miltiades, Cimon, and Pericles. To no purpose! — for Socrates, like Satan the accuser in the book of Job, is hard to convince of human merit. Beginning with Pericles, with whom he is particularly severe, he charges them all with failing in the one and only duty of which we have spoken (515 C-517 C). Wars they may have won, harbors and docks they may have built. But to the virtue of the Athenians they made no positive — nay, even a negative — contribution; this is shown by the acts of the Athenians, who in the end, like the cattle of an unskilful herdsman, turned on them and threatened them with destruction.²¹⁴ They have aimed only to procure for the city the satisfaction of material wants, where true statesmen would have struggled to inculcate virtue, and like mere cooks and vintners have overfed the citizens as if they were so many children, on the sweetmeats of indulgence; the citizens, their digestion now seriously upset, in their simplicity do not know whom to blame (519 A), and will condemn Socrates, who has attempted to serve as their true statesman, like children condemning a doctor on a charge brought by a pastry cook (521 D-E).

Beneath the exaggeration and satire of this, runs the current of a des-

²¹⁴ It is interesting to find in the *Meno*, supposed to have been written not much later than the *Gorgias*, a similar criticism of the great Athenian statesmen as having been unable to transmit their virtues, this time to their own sons. In this slighter dialogue, the almost prophetic intensity of the *Gorgias* is not to be found, and there is even the suggestion that the substantial

achievements of the statesmen in question are given recognition. But the tone is highly ironic, and the whole discussion is conducted in terms of what Socrates thinks Anytus, whom he has drawn into replying to his questions, is likely to accept as true; we therefore have no reason to believe that the favorable judgments expressed are those of Socrates or Plato.

perately earnest Socratic morality, convinced that virtue is effective knowledge of the art of ordered life, and that without virtue, politics is poltroonery. The heart of this critique of the democratic system of government, as it is expressed in the *Gorgias*, is that it fails to make knowledge of this sort its guide, and that, in consequence, it runs off in quest of false values.²¹⁵ One remedy for the evil (the remedy which Plato first proposed) is formulated in the *Republic*, whose lords of right rule, the guardians, are nothing if not moralists in action.

But Plato, it seems, was not willing to end the *Gorgias* without finding some statesman of an earlier time upon whom he could with a clear conscience bestow a word of genuine praise, and his choice of a recipient is not without significance. In the concluding myth, describing the sanctions in the next world of conduct good and bad, Socrates remarks upon the small number of good men whose goodness survives the corrupting influence of power. Among these few he points out, as an outstanding example "among us and in the eyes of all Greece, Aristides the son of Lysimachus." This praise of a political figure who had certainly the reputation of a loyal servant of the Athenian democratic constitution²¹⁶ points to the conclusion that Plato inside the field of Athenian politics did not distribute praise and blame in accord with the degree of a man's willingness to bring in Spartan aid to overthrow the democracy, or, like the Old Oligarch, look with haughty scorn (tempered with admiration of wealth and power) upon the whole picture of an Athens under popular rule.

In refusing his approval to the elder statesmen of Athens and their followers, the Socrates of the *Gorgias* made at least a clear statement of his

²¹⁵ In this connection we may directly confront Popper's recurrent charge that the many restrictions laid on the commercial activities of citizens in both of Plato's ideal states are evidence of his kinship with the oligarchic enemies of Periclean commerce and empire, the docks, the Long Walls, and the ships. Since Popper sees this commercial expansion as enabling gifted individuals to move from class to class, and as freeing men's minds from blind tradition, he will allow Plato no other reason for his restrictions than opposition to these good things. Inconsistently, however, he has allowed Socrates to deprecate Athenian concern with commerce, excusing his denunciation (p. 593) as arising from "his anxiety to stress the things which, in his opinion, mattered most." Apparently Popper is willing to accept the same excuse for the exaggeration of Socrates' austere attitude as seen in Antisthenes. There appears

to us no reason to doubt that precisely similar reasons moved Plato to embody in his ideal constitutions the Socratic recommendation that, so far as practicable, men should turn aside from seductive material concerns to seek spiritual improvement.

²¹⁶ A recent authority on Greek political history, upon whom we have earlier drawn (Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, 1945, vol. I, p. 47), has said something to our purpose here: in the fourth century, the moderate democrat praised Clisthenes and Aristides, without approval of the leaders of the subsequent development; the moderate oligarch repudiated Clisthenes but accepted Solon; and Solon himself was discountenanced by the extreme oligarchs. If we are to follow Gomme's classification, Plato apparently would be placed among the "moderate democrats"; which is not far from where, in the *Laws*, we find him.

reasons. In the *Menexenus*, the case is more difficult. Along with other aims, Plato has set himself to criticize the Athenian form of government and its chosen leaders, particularly Pericles. But here we are obliged before making any use of the dialogue, to dissociate the two elements of irreverent irony and earnest idealism of which it is subtly compounded, a task which, were we limited to the *Menexenus* itself, would be insoluble. In our search for Plato's serious meaning, we must look beyond the work itself, chiefly to other Platonic writings where, in contexts untouched by irony, comparable ideas are expressed. Patiently pursued, this method will yield a little new-found gold. But in the main we must be content if it permits us to show that, granted our interpretation of Plato's serious works, the *Menexenus* can be read in accord with it, a demonstration the more necessary because Popper, reading the *Menexenus* in the light of his own pejorative interpretation of Plato's serious works, has employed it to Plato's hurt.

Be it said at once that the *Menexenus* is not among the happiest achievements of Plato's genius. We have earlier claimed substantial value for its concluding section, the message of the ancestors to their descendants, and it is not without other eloquent passages, though they will not figure in our discussion. But modern taste does not easily tolerate such extreme interpenetration as we have here of jest and earnestness. For us there is possible only a one-way passage from the serious into the frolic, or the reverse. At any rate, let us say that only a transcendent comic genius (Aristophanes, for instance) can for us successfully turn the trick of repeated comings and goings between the two poles. And so as we read our *Menexenus* we find the experience, to say the least, a trifle disconcerting.

More serious in its implications is the second hindrance to our appreciation. Our moral taste is offended in beholding what appears to be a rather frivolous satirical belittlement of a very great man, Pericles, who is associated in our minds with most of what is of highest value and, one might say, sanctity, in Greek tradition. We see in Pericles, if not a Greek saint, like Socrates, at least a dedicated statesman, and the added fact that his dedication so importantly corresponds to our *own*, through the shared ideal of democracy, heightens our revulsion to ironical merrymaking at his expense. That the imagined occasion of Plato's parody, like that of the historical speech of Pericles to which the parody is presumed to be attached, was an honoring of the war dead, is a consideration that carries our feeling further in the same direction. What can be said in mitigation of this apparently grave offense?

Unfortunately there has been much dispute over the motives that impelled Plato to compose and publish this controversial book. Wilamowitz, for example, believed that in it Plato was making a bid for his new school by a demonstration that he could, so to say, outsmart the sophists at their own rhetorical game. It has also been suggested that possibly it had no more serious purpose than the amusement of its author in proving to himself his

own literary ingenuity in subduing his imagination to the requirements of this special literary form. Popper seems very sure that it was composed with no other end in view than to discredit Pericles, democracy, and enlightenment in general.²¹⁷ In the midst of the obscurity which has caused this diversity of interpretation, there are, nevertheless, some clear areas. There is at the very least light enough to permit us to see, as in what follows, the inadequacy of Popper's view. Further, we shall maintain without denying the possibility of some of the other proposed interpretations, that at least one clear and creditable motive can be shown to be involved.

To begin with, it is perfectly clear that Pericles is not the single object of Plato's satirical attack. The greater portion of the speech in the *Menexenus* is a deliberately garbled version of Athenian history, in which the valiant deeds of the Athenian ancestors of the war dead, their singleminded devotion to the general good of Greece, their glorious victories over all who opposed them, are celebrated, and their defeats and failures glossed over and reduced almost to the vanishing point, in sublime disregard of historical perspective. Now all this bad history has little or nothing to do with Pericles, no point of attachment to his speech, in which only a brief general mention of the ancestors was given a place. Even in Plato's encomium upon the Athenian constitution, some of the points made have no direct relevance to the Periclean speech.²¹⁸ The target of the oration is rather the whole class of those patriot-orators, of whom Pericles is one, whose indifference to truth and blindness to

²¹⁷ Popper has called the *Menexenus* "that sneering reply to Pericles' funeral oration" (p. 192) and has in several other passages in text and notes made play with this unproved assumption that Pericles is Plato's sole target in the dialogue. Popper's whole discussion is discolored by such expressions as "Plato gives himself away," "maliciously" (p. 192), "hatred," "open scorn," "ridicule" (all of admirable things) (p. 534). The charge is made that Plato's praise in the *Menexenus* of the "pure hatred" of the Athenians for the barbarians (245 D) is ridicule "by a pro Spartan partisan" of the "liberality of Athens" to foreigners (p. 534), which Popper has chosen to present as a particularly Periclean trait (cf. our p. 286). Plato is talking of the Athenians' refusal to ally themselves with the Persians in war against other Greek states, and is perhaps ironically exaggerating a commonplace of the usual patriotic address (see our discussion of the expected topics of praise for Athenians in the orators, n. 236, p. 227). On p. 95 Popper explains the reference in the *Menexenus* to

the traditional origin of the Athenians from the soil of Attica as due to Plato's desire "to impute the naturalistic argument" unjustifiably to Pericles. The climax of this sort of vilification of Plato is reached in Popper's statement that not improbably Plato's reference to the "equal birth" of all Athenians "is meant as a scornful allusion to the 'low' birth of Pericles' and Aspasia's sons" (p. 533). In the light of the similar talk of the equal birth of Athenians from their soil, found in Lysias' funeral oration (see our discussion, pp. 337, 345), this suggestion is revealed to be as baseless as it is mean. For the record, it may be well to note here the erroneousness of Popper's reiterated assertion (pp. 534, 585) that in the *Menexenus*, 236 A, Plato represents Sokrates as the pupil of Antiphon the Rhamnusian, which is based simply upon a misreading of the text, and also the error of his statement (p. 534) that this Antiphon was not an Athenian. Rhamnus is the name of an Attic deme.

²¹⁸ These are the points we discuss in n. 217 above, and Appendix IX, p. 609.

the true good of their country as Plato conceived it revealed itself in their dangerous idealization of the actual and imperfect Athens. Such orations were staple productions of the period; time has spared us only one other example,²¹⁹ a speech with some uncertainty assigned to Lysias, wherein the kind of encomiastic hyperbole in describing Athenian history and institutions against which Plato is protesting is admirably illustrated.

To point out the falsity and unwholesomeness of these rhetorical constructions is the clear purpose behind the irony in that passage of the introduction to the dialogue (235 A-C) in which Socrates expresses his admiration of their authors, whose carefully prepared encomia, compounded of the true and the false, and most beautifully tricked out in words and phrases, practice sorcery upon our souls; and as we listen, especially when those who are not Athenian citizens are by our side, we ourselves and our city grow more splendid and majestic in our eyes, and we imagine ourselves dwelling in the Islands of the Blessed, rather than in the actual Athens. Plato thus serves notice upon his reader that one major purpose in the speech to come will be to provide an exaggerated example of rhetorical deceits of this kind.

Detailed examination of the oration in the *Menexenus* will disclose in addition many passages, especially near the beginning of the speech, but here and there throughout, in which the standard tricks of rhetorical embellishment, artificial antithesis, alliteration, and assonance,²²⁰ have been obviously overdone for satirical effect. These shots are fired not primarily at Pericles; for his speech, as Plato read it in Thucydides, was only a moderate example of the decorated style. They come much more closely home to the style of Gorgias and his school, in which such exuberance reached full flood.

What touches Pericles most nearly is, first, the (to our taste) rather displeasing horseplay of the introductory passage (235 E-236 C) in which Socrates gives us the farcical picture of a Pericles whose speeches were written for him by his schoolmistress in the art of rhetoric, Aspasia. We are not amused, but neither need we draw too solemn a face about it if we remember that Pericles in the earlier fourth century, while certainly looked back to as among the greater greats, had not yet been put upon a pinnacle as he has been in the modern world (we shall presently see that Plato was willing to recognize his greatness as an abstract intelligence, apart from the question of his political program), and, secondly, that Plato would hardly have supposed that anyone would be taken in by his facetious words. At the end of the dialogue (249 D-E) he makes it sufficiently plain that Aspasia is not the author of the *Menexenus* oration, nor probably of any other speech. In other words, we do not here have to do with serious, malicious gossip.

²¹⁹ The Funeral Oration in the Demosthenic corpus ([Demosthenes] 1x) is generally assigned to a later period. The oration of [Lysias] referred to is Oration 11

²²⁰ F. Blass, *Die Attische Beredsamkeit*, 1892, vol. II, p. 470ff., discusses these rhetorical features in detail.

The second main reference to Pericles in the *Menexenus*, and at the same time to the Athenian constitution, is the short and breathtaking passage (238 B-239 A) in which we seem to have a sort of exaggerated paraphrase of the central political message of the Periclean Funeral Oration.²²¹ A first reading of this passage leaves one with the impression that Plato is offering us an unqualified satire upon democracy and all its works. For the orator seems to have pilfered fineries from many a political wardrobe, including monarchy, democracy, and aristocracy, for the adornment of an Athens never seen on land or sea. We hear of the unexampled excellence of her citizens, and of the corresponding excellence of her government; of the unbroken continuity of her constitution, from the time of the earliest kings; and of the willingness with which the "many," holders of power, accord office and influence only to those whose merits, unhampered by considerations of wealth and birth, qualify them to contribute to the common good. At the root of this admirable harmony lies the common origin of all Athenians from the womb of their mother Attica, and their consequent equality: as brothers, they will not endure that any one division of the population be enslaved to any other. Taken in its literal application to the Athens of Plato's experience and appraisal, this is obviously a fancy picture; mingled with the exaggeration of Athenian excellence there is, clearly, a note of irony. The problem set for us, then, is to discover the nature and scope of this irony, and to determine the justice of Popper's conviction that Plato is herein holding up to cynical derision the noblest of Athenian ideals.

If, now, we call to mind what we know from Plato's other writings to have comprised his political ideals, and set them in point-for-point correlation, as we have done in our footnote, with the topics developed by "Socrates-as-orator" in the *Menexenus*,²²² the main object of Plato's irony comes plainly into view. One trait of the Athenian polity he could not accept as ideal, or even, without substantial qualification, as the best practicable arrangement: the vesting of direct and final power in the mass of the people. But with this exception, what one reads in this part of the *Menexenus* is a kind of Athenian "Republic," a serious congratulation of the Athenians, on the part of a fellow believer, upon the nobility of the ideals to which they stood committed, together with an ironical declaration that those ideals were, forsooth, perfectly embodied in the actual Athens. In effect, Plato is saying: "The glories for which our Fourth-of-July orators are in the habit of praising Athens are indeed for the most part glorious; but alas! today they have largely ceased to be." The passage constitutes one further expression of Plato's feeling that Periclean democracy had failed, and that particularly as contrasted with its more splendid aims, taken over, as Plato believed, from an earlier and more admirable

²²¹ Thucydides II, 37.

²²² An analysis in detail of the political section of the *Menexenus* may be found in Appendix IX, pp. 609ff.

Athens, it was a sad disappointment and a mockery. It shows us, too, that in his eyes little good was accomplished by the periodic restatement of these ideals, in the guise of actualities, with added extravagance and embroideries of diction, before an Athenian audience, but that this practice stood in the way of a serious attempt to improve matters.²²³ In so far as the remembered figure of Pericles stood before the world as the chief spokesman for the claim that the developed Athenian democracy was the best possible, indeed the only answer to the political problem, it was Plato's wish to discredit him. But our understanding of Plato's purpose is only impeded by the atmosphere of "scornful allusion" and "hatred" that Popper has evoked.²²⁴ Plato's indictment is quite a different thing from the malicious, "sneering reply" into which Popper has construed it. Indeed, it is continuous and in large part identical with that Socratic criticism of the leaders of the democracy "for their lack of [true, moral] wisdom," of which Popper has so strongly approved.²²⁵

The glorification of the Athenian polity standing complete, the historical section of the oration now begins. And here we should make it plain that in spite of the sometimes fantastic romancing of Athenian history, there are portions of the record in which, Athenian glory being actually attested and requiring no imaginary coloration to improve it, Plato can and does express with enthusiasm and persuasive power some of his own cherished appreciations of the true greatness of his native city. Such, notably, is the long account of the courage and nobility that Athens displayed in the Persian wars.

Toward the end of the *Menexenus* oration (246 D ff.), there occurs the earlier mentioned speech of the ancestors. This speech borrows nothing from any of the ironical sections that have gone before, contains no hint of irony, and could be sustained by a formidable array of parallel passages from other dialogues; it is therefore to be regarded with confidence as carrying a straightforwardly Platonic message. And this message offers a key to the positive value of the dialogue. For Plato is in effect telling the living through the voice of their ancestors speaking from the tomb, how a city may escape the perils which flattery and self-complacency are setting in its path. Glory, we hear, in language that almost reminds us of Faust,²²⁶ is not a treasure that can be simply given by one generation to the next. It is a thing that must constantly be renewed and rewon, if it is not to turn into its contrary, and become a reproach. And glory is the fruit of virtue and of this alone. Without virtue, those reputed goods, knowledge, riches, and all the rest, are nothing worth.

Leaving the *Menexenus* behind us, we turn briefly to the *Phaedrus* for a passage, unnoticed by Popper, in which Plato has given a final proof that his

²²³ Crossman (p 300) has warned us, in our own day, against this same folly of equating our "millennial vision" of what our democracy aims to be with the far less ideal

realities of contemporary politics

²²⁴ See n 217, p 336 above, for references.

²²⁵ Popper, pp 194, 188, 190

²²⁶ *Faust*, part II, ll 11575-11576

criticism of Pericles was an affair of principle unclouded by the prejudice and malice of the mere partisan. Here the Platonic Socrates, with all earnestness and with judicial calm, bestows upon Pericles the fine compliment of styling him "the most perfect orator of the day," finding in him the product of high native intelligence ripened by philosophic training into "lofty-mindedness, in every way effective of its ends" (269 E-270 A). It is only by adding the implied reservation that for all his gifts and training, Pericles had not employed his rhetoric to the highest end — the purpose of pleasing the divine rather than of "speaking and acting before men"²²⁷ — that Plato sets in the perspective of his thought as a whole praise which otherwise would have been near to adulation.

We need carry no further in this place our exposition of Plato's attitude toward the Athenian constitution. We may sum up our findings in the section just ended, in the statement that Plato's criticism of democracy, reported immediately above, and also those other criticisms of democracy which have been so much stressed by Popper,²²⁸ should not lead to the conclusion that

²²⁷ *Phaedrus* 273 E, 274 A, trans Fowler, Loeb Library

²²⁸ We may protest in this place against Popper's report (p 44) of what Plato says in the *Republic* about democracy. Plato, we are told, identifies "freedom with lawlessness, equality before the law with disorder." So Popper represents Plato's complaint that what is called by the honorable name of freedom, in a democracy such as the Athens he knew, too often means disregard of law and decorum, and his objection on principle to such "equality" as the choice of public officials by means of the lot. Plato does not prove himself by these objections, even if we judge them excessive, to be an opponent *simpliciter* of freedom, or of all that is usually meant by equality before the law. Popper continues: "Democrats are described as profligate and niggardly, as insolent, lawless and shameless, as fierce and terrible beasts of prey, as gratifying every whim." Anyone who will examine the relevant passages will see that these qualities have been chosen by Popper in part from Plato's description (559 D ff) of the youthful excesses of the "democratic man," his wild-oats period, so to speak, from which he later recovers, to a considerable extent, in the normal case (561 B), the "insolent" and "lawless" persons mentioned (560 E) are personifications of the young man's profligate habits and opinions, the "beasts of prey" (559 D) are his evil companions, in so far as they represent

also elements in a democratic state, they are the "drones," the ruined and reckless men who, Plato says, are bred in oligarchies (555 D f) but become powerful only in a democracy, through the failure of the mass of the citizens to pay sufficient heed to public affairs (564 B ff). They are not Plato's typical "democratic man," nor do they constitute the largest element among the people, to represent these, Plato has given us elsewhere the simile of the worthy old skipper, bewildered and befooled by the ignorant self-styled navigators (*Republic* 488 A ff). In the passage which Popper purports to be summarizing, only the indiscriminate gratification of whims is truly charged by Plato against the democratic man. Popper then declares that Plato depicts the democrats "as living solely for pleasure, and for unnecessary and unclean desires," and adds "(They fill their bellies like the beasts," was Heraclitus' way of putting it)." This is, first, an error, since Plato's democratic man is expressly said to alternate between indulging his various appetites and impulses, and exercising virtuous restraint (The "democratic man," it should be noted, is himself largely a metaphorical being, his fickleness in maturity symbolizing the democratic custom of allotting office now to a worthy, now to an unworthy citizen, as his early excesses symbolize the civic disorders attendant upon a revolution from oligarchy to democracy.) Popper's charge is, secondly, an injustice, since no matter what Hera

of Plato's logic in order to learn in the end that "the many are incapable of philosophy" (*Republic* 494 A)? Or was Plato perhaps aiming at the popular leaders of his own day, whom he constantly represents as led and determined in their policies and judgments by the "great beast," to whose moods and appetites they are the indulgent servitors? Ought not Plato, on the Pareto principle, to have effected a politic concealment of these opinions in order to win over democrats to his unrighteous cause? Popper does not stay for an answer to these difficulties. Instead, he vaguely indicates as those whom Plato aimed to deceive, "all intellectuals" and "all righteous men" and all who cherished the "freedom of thought for which Socrates had died."²³⁰ The class of Athenian contemporaries of Plato who could satisfy all these conditions must have been small. But at this point Popper seems to have forgotten Plato's supposed Athenian conspiracy, and speaks as if Plato had been casting spells consciously intended to bind generations of readers yet unborn.²³¹

But one can spare himself the pains of such distortion by reverting to the simpler view that we have been all this while maintaining: Plato's basic aim was no conspiratorial perversion of truth. He was honestly endeavoring to carry forward the Socratic quest and to set forth the pattern of a political order in conformity with the highest demands of morality. The dialogues are "propaganda," but only in the sense that they constitute an attempt to spread a knowledge of this rational faith. The *Republic* is literally addressed as advice and guidance to two young men, Glaucon and Adeimantus, touching their choice of principles for the management of their lives. Behind and beyond them Plato was addressing not the body of Athenian citizens, rich or poor, but the intellectual few, whom he hoped to convert from nihilistic doubts or selfish ambition to a preference for the upright life, at any sacrifice. Within Athens this might mean the giving up of all hope of political influence and the acceptance of obscurity and probable poverty. Somewhere in the Greek world, however, the message might reach the ears of persons who had power to establish better laws. And from the spectacle of their success, a light might shine capable of illuminating even the ignorant many. That such a program was impractical cannot be denied; yet it was not beyond the horizon of Plato's hope.

If Plato did not, then, expect to see the embodiment at Athens of the Republic, would he have favored the installation there of an oligarchy of a frequent Greek type, a government controlled wholly by the wealthy few? What Plato thought of such constitutions, "in which the rich govern and the poor

²³⁰ Popper, p. 193. In speaking of "all righteous men" Popper might of course claim to be including the nonintellectual righteous. But the dialogues, being, as they are, intellectually demanding, would seem unfitted to lead astray these persons.

²³¹ Popper has apparently converted his

own belief (discussed on pp. 447-449) that Plato has in fact poisoned innumerable generous minds down to our own day, into Plato's foreknowledge of the countless thousands who would read his works, and his deliberate intention to befool them all.

man does not share in the government"²³² (*Republic* 550 C-D), is plainly and indignantly told in the eighth book of the *Republic*. This type of government, according to Plato's announced classification, is one degree less evil than democracy. But it is interesting to note that it actually receives at his hands a more bitter castigation.²³³ Wealth and virtue, we hear, lie in opposing pans of the balance. Wealth is no more a valid criterion in the selection of those who are to hold political power than in the choice of a ship's pilot. Inseparable from oligarchic rule is the division of the city into two bitterly hostile cities, "dwelling together and always plotting against one another." The greed of the wealthy leads to the existence of a class of men who are in the city but in no sense of it, complete destitutes or paupers, from whose ranks are drawn the professional criminals in which such states abound. These are the evils, Plato says, "or perhaps even more than these,"²³⁴ that afflict the oligarchic state. Was Plato, in this sense, an oligarch?

Slightly more worth the asking is what would have been Plato's response to an invitation to join a movement seeking by nonviolent, constitutional measures (assuming that such proposals would have been tolerated by the democracy) to restore Athens to a regime comparable in essentials to that of the Solonian time. His "apolity" would have stood in the way of active political participation. Would he then have approved it in theory? It could be argued that such a goal would have appeared too meager to the author of the *Republic*; even the less hopeful author of the *Politicus* and the *Laws* believed that new levels of insight into the problems of government should make possible advances over those older political forms.²³⁵ Or it could be argued that he would doubtless have welcomed the removal of the evils that he saw flowing from the uncontrolled democracy, and the restoration of such an Athens as had conquered at Marathon.²³⁶

Would he, like Thucydides, have approved the constitution of the Five

²³² The word here translated "government" is *archê*. This form of constitution would be distinguished from the Solonian type by the exclusion of the poorer citizens from all, or almost all, rights of participation, among which are included the exercise of voting rights and a seat in the Assembly or in the law courts. Plato in the *Laws* 767 A, 768 C) regards the prerogative of sitting as a juror as not technically an "office" (*archê*), yet still in a sense an "office" of real importance. He makes it a basic prerequisite to the citizen's feeling of membership in his city; cf. p. 525 below.

²³³ In a later dialogue than the *Republic*, what Plato calls "oligarchy," defined in that place as the "rule of the few without law," is in fact set lower in the scale of value than democracy (*Politicus* 303 A-B).

²³⁴ Shorey's translation, Loeb Library.

²³⁵ In the *Politicus* (299 B-E) he speaks of the necessity of constant investigation of the problems of all arts, particularly that of government, if civilization is not to stagnate. The whole enterprise of the *Laws* (pace Popper) is an adventure along new paths of practical legislation. See the discussion of Plato's *Laws* in A. E. Taylor's *Plato, the Man and His Work*, 1929, p. 464. Taylor has also provided in the introduction to his translation of the *Laws* a tabulation of Plato's legislative originalities.

²³⁶ At *Laws* 693 A, Plato begins his account of the excellence of the Athenian constitution at the beginning of the fifth century, which he refers to as a moderate form of government under elected rulers, or (701 E) a moderate degree of freedom.

Thousand, established at Athens in 411 B.C., following the failure of the more extreme rule of the Four Hundred? It was doubtless Thucydides' approval of this government which caused Popper to classify him as an oligarch; Thucydides says of it (VIII, 98) that it combined wisely the interests of the few and the many. Plato, we can be fairly certain, would not willingly have accepted it. If it had been provided with a well-devised set of mutually adjusted laws, and had been administered with due respect for these laws, he would in so far have approved it (*Politicus* 300 B ff.). And he might have approved, in part, its assignment of power to those able to serve the state as cavalry or heavy-armed soldiers; in the *Laws* (753 B) he assigns the right to elect Lawwardens to persons similarly qualified.²³⁷ But also in the *Laws*, he countenances no limitation of the right to participate in government to a minority of the citizens, constituting not more than a quarter of the whole,²³⁸ but instead gives every citizen active rights; nor had Solon made any comparable restriction. In this respect, therefore, the constitution of the Five Thousand would have resembled the "oligarchy" which Plato so firmly rejects in the *Republic*, as breeding "two cities" within the city, and would not have met his mind.

Such speculations are not very nourishing, and do not end very far from their starting points. They probably go as far as the facts will take us toward revealing Plato's outlook upon peaceful reform of the Athenian government.

(4) Revolutionary violence. But Popper has added a second, highly damaging charge in his assertion that Plato felt no revulsion against the violence that had accompanied the two oligarchic revolutions of 411 and 404, and would have approved an equally violent third. Can we find in Plato's writings passages that will tell us what he thought of these events?

There comes immediately to mind the strong condemnation of oligarchic violation of law expressed by the Socrates of the *Apology* (32 C-D). Popper, of course, will not allow this Socrates to be our Plato. And yet, as we have earlier argued, he is beyond his rights in so refusing. Plato's implied approval of this part of the speech is inextricable from his implied approval of the entire speech. We may repose our confidence in it as genuinely expressive of Plato's own personal conviction.

There is another passage in which Plato specifically refers to this same oligarchic revolution of 404, in which Critias was involved. But as ill-luck

²³⁷ These foot- and horse-soldiers in the city of the *Laws* will, however, include all citizens except criminals, cowards, etc., since here there will be no sailors, and no impoverished citizens unable to provide themselves with arms.

²³⁸ Though called the Five Thousand, the governing class, defined by the qualifications set up, appears to have been larger;

see Lysias xx, 13. We do not wish to blink the fact that in the *Laws* (737 C-E) Plato sets tentatively at approximately five thousand the number of adult male citizens. He will keep the citizen body within the chosen limits not by disfranchisement, however, but by a continuous policy of population restriction and colonization. Cf. our p. 198 and n. 257, p. 353.

will have it, it is in the *Menexenus*, and we are warned, therefore, that it will have to be employed with caution, and in subordination to more positive indications drawn from other sources. Nevertheless, when thus read, this part of the *Menexenus*, like those passages which we have already examined, admits readily of an interpretation in perfect accord with the general trend of our evidence. To establish this result we shall make use of a triangular comparison between what is said in part of the historical section in the *Menexenus*, what Plato has elsewhere committed himself to, and what Lysias,²³⁹ in the corresponding section of his funeral oration, has said on the same topics.

Lysias, recounting the glories of Athenian history, skips lightly down the decades, celebrating at length Marathon and Salamis as victories over the barbarians, and then expatiating upon the beneficence of the Athenian empire. No mention has been made of the very existence of the Peloponnesian war, when suddenly we hear that at Aegospotami, either through the "badness of the commander or through the will of the gods," the Athenian power was destroyed, and the other Greek cities, their protector being laid low, now found themselves enslaved by the Spartans. Lysias next praises the "men of the Piraeus," the embattled Athenian democrats, for their refusal to accept this enslavement, for their compelling their fellow citizens to share with them their restored freedom, and for their magnanimity in pursuing, not vengeance, but a policy of reconciliation in the interests of civic concord. It will be evident from this partial *résumé* that the funeral orator chose his own historical proportions, and could omit or dilate at will, so long as he took care to evoke in his listeners only welcome memories. We shall be able, therefore, to take Plato's selective emphasis in his speech in the *Menexenus* as a partial index of the speaker's own views.

Covering the same period as Lysias,²⁴⁰ Plato praises Athenian achievements at Marathon, Salamis, Plataea, and Eurymedon, all of them being interpreted as the saving of the whole of Greece from the barbarians; only at Plataea, he remarks, did the Spartans lend aid. He then speaks in an injured tone of the envy felt by the other Greeks for the Athenians, and of the latter's services in defending Hellenes against enslavement by fellow Hellenes (the Thebans, aided by the Spartans). He proceeds to praise the generosity of the Athenians in making peace with the Spartans (the peace of Nicias, which ended the first half of the Peloponnesian war) without seeking utterly to destroy them, and praises also the triumphal valor of the Athenians, who thus conquered those same Spartans with whose aid they had formerly beaten off the barbarians. Of the Sicilian expedition he says only that having gone too far afield in this altruistic enterprise, the Athenians abandoned it, meeting with "ill fortune," but bringing honor upon those who conquered them. He com-

²³⁹ The use of the name Lysias in this passage is a practice adopted for brevity, and is not meant to imply a judgment that

the oration is genuine. The sections summarized are 20-66.

²⁴⁰ *Menexenus* 239 D-244 B.

ments bitterly upon the ingratitude of the Spartans, toward the end of the Peloponnesian war, in bringing in the Persian king as their ally against Athens. He celebrates the victory of Arginusae as proof of Athens' true invincibility; Athens was, in fact, he says, laid low only by her own internal dissensions.

Plato has now brought us to the fateful year 404; we look eagerly to see what he will reveal of his attitude toward the oligarchic revolution. But like Lysias, he leaves it for all practical purposes unmentioned. The listener could never guess that terrible slaughter had taken place. Quite unlike Lysias, however, he makes no reference to the heroic action of the men of the Piraeus. In hushed tones, he speaks at some length of the reconciliation, founded, he says, on the sense of kinship among the Athenians, who are of one blood. The struggle between the two parties, he says, was caused not by "wickedness or hatred" on either side, but only by "misfortune." We, the living, are witnesses of the forgiveness that has reunited us.

There were several points during this recital at which our attention had reason to be alerted. Was it not interesting to note how the speaker not only omits every faintest reference to the activities of the Thirty, but makes the exaggerated statement that no blame attached to either side in the civil war? Lysias, in spite of the inhibition imposed by the spirit of the occasion, could plainly hint of his hatred of the tyranny. No doubt Plato might, consistently with his own principles, have found a missile or two to fling at the Thirty Tyrants; so much the *Apology* makes clear. But he could scarcely, as the same *Apology* makes equally evident, have joined Lysias in praising without serious reservations the democratic system supported by the opponents of the Thirty.²⁴¹ We may believe that he wished seriously to condone neither side in the struggle, yet he could not turn his swelling Funeral Oration into a sour distribution of blame. For this reason he may well have chosen to pass over the unpleasantness with a pious phrase — not incompatible with his own principle that no man does wrong willingly — and to direct attention solely to the admirable, following the same pattern of patriotic extravagance seen in his unrecognizable picture of the Sicilian expedition.

Examining the praise bestowed upon Athenian achievements, we observe the stamp of sincerity and of Plato's personal evaluation upon the praise of Greek loyalty to Greek against the barbarian, and of Athens' moderation in concluding peace with Sparta. Plato's irony, it seems, in this passage has limited itself wholly to whitewashing national faults and failures, exaggerating national virtues, and amplifying to mythical proportions the kinship bonds between the Athenians themselves and the Hellenes generally; the ideals he upholds are expressed in hyperbole, but remain his own. In the celebration

²⁴¹ At *Apology* 32 A-C is mentioned the condemnation, contrary to law, of the Argi-

nusae generals; cf. our p. 318. See also our pp. 304, 638-639.

of the amnesty after the defeat of the Thirty, with its mutual forgiveness by those who are of one blood, we surely hear the veritable voice of Plato, uplifted in a species of thankful prayer for that "harmony of hearts" which, as we know, was to be the theme song of his *Republic*. And to this we may point in evidence that he could never have given assent to the violent misrule of the Thirty, and that the renewal of civil war and internecine bloodshed had no place in his hopes and plans for the future of his native city.

We shall not dismiss this passage of the *Menexenus* without noting the several slaps and rebukes administered to the Spartans, and to the pride expressed in the Athenian victory of Arginusae. We shall ask that these be remembered, as we shall find use for them at a later point in the argument.

Plato's abhorrence of civil violence may also be inferred from the well-known autobiographical passage in the most reliable of the Platonic letters (VII, 324 E ff.), in which "Plato" revives, after the passing of many years, the repulsion and shock that he experienced as a young man when what seemed the fair promise of the party to which Critias had joined himself degenerated into a brutal violence that made the democratic administration that preceded it shine with the brightness of the age of gold. The letter records also the attempt of the Thirty to implicate his friend Socrates *volens volens* in their crime. "But he refused, and ran every risk rather than become a partner in their unholy deeds." And the writer of the letter adds a generous appreciation of the moderation and restraint of the restored democracy. Now if the author of this letter has been speaking — as many believe — with the authority of Plato,²⁴² we have in these citations a valuable *a fortiori* confirmation of our right to believe that the deprecation of civic discord and appreciation of the restored democracy, expressed in the *Menexenus*, were sincere.

A few pages later in this letter we come upon something which reads almost like a direct answer to the question we have raised. It is as if someone had put to Plato the direct question, "What would you do, Plato, if you thought that the political institutions at Athens were out of order and that you had the knowledge requisite to set them right?" "Plato's" answer is one which he thinks befits "a man of sense": "If his native city seems to him badly governed, he will offer his counsel, provided his advice has any chance of being heard and he will not be put to death for his pains. But he must not attempt to force a change of government upon his mother city. If it is not possible for the best constitution to arise without the exile and slaughter of citizens, he should hold his peace and pray that heaven's blessing will be upon him and his city" (VII, 331 D).

We have now exhausted our knowledge of Platonic, or reputedly Platonic, passages from which anything explicit can be learned touching Plato's judg-

²⁴² The attitude taken in this book toward the Platonic Letters is discussed in our note 237, on page 369 below.

ment upon oligarchic violence inside Athens. If we wish to discover anything further under this head, we are, like Popper, reduced to inference and interpretation. We are forced to search Plato's works for remarks that may apply to Athens past and present, even though such remarks may be without specific reference to Athenian history.

Among the first fruits of such a search and pointing in the same direction as the passages above, is Plato's strong deprecation of shedding the kindred blood of fellow citizens, in the *Republic* (565 D). There we hear of the "protector of the people," who on his way to becoming the tyrant, "does not withhold his hand" from this crime, or from proposing the redistribution of lands and the abolition of debts. He is likened to the worshipper at the shrine of Lycæan Zeus in Arcadia, in the terrifying legend, who having tasted "of the one bit of human entrails minced up with those of other victims, is inevitably transformed into a wolf." If this passage stood alone as the vehicle of Plato's moralizing reflections on the use of violence for the attainment of political ends, further discussion of the topic would be superfluous.

But what are we to make of the several passages to which Popper has pointed an accusing finger, in which Plato apparently accords to the wise statesman a hand free to "banish and to kill" whom he thinks fit?

We must here make objection to Popper's including in this category²¹³ the procedure suggested in the *Republic* (540 E-541 A) for accomplishing, in the first instance and with the greatest speed, what has been admitted as the near impossibility of launching the ideal city. This is the "sending out into the country" of all the inhabitants of the chosen city above ten years old, and the educating of the children, thus "removed from the influence of their parents' temper and habits," in the laws and customs of the new polity. The purpose in view, that of effecting a fresh start, unencumbered by the traditional mores, is one that Plato seriously regarded as important. But the highly fanciful tactic proposed should not be treated too solemnly. The suggested picture of a handful of philosophers left alone with a city-full of young children, like Boswell's Dr. Johnson locked up with a baby in a tower, shows us that Plato cannot have carried his thinking beyond the first stage of tentative suggestion, keeping his attention fixed wholly upon the end proposed, without due reflection upon the means. This being the case, it would be absurd to suppose that he had seriously determined upon the ruthless use of violence, and we should be wrong to hear the knock upon the door, the heavy boot upon the threshold, which Popper's words "deport" and "expel" evoke. The word Plato used can equally well be employed (*Symposium* 179 E) for "sending away" to the Islands of the Blessed, and the "country" into which the parents

²¹³ Popper, p. 162. Popper reinforces his interpretation of the Platonic passage by slight inaccuracies in the translation, tending to give the impression of greater scorn or violence in Plato's attitude. Thus he

translates "send away" (*apopompô*) as "expel and deport," and makes Plato refer to the "mean" character of the children's parents, where no corresponding word exists in the Greek text.

are to be sent may be their own farms or country estates, outside the city proper.

The second passage to which Popper has directed attention is not so easily disposed of, and indeed contains implications of an attitude which, though it is not the partisan ruthlessness of an oligarch, nor the special ruthlessness of a heartless aesthete, as Popper suggests, still does not, for several reasons, commend itself to our acceptance. Let us first see what this attitude actually is, and then set it in relation to the temper of the times in which Plato lived. As Popper has correctly reported,²⁴⁴ Plato in the *Politicus*, speaking of those rare and almost hypothetical beings, the true statesmen, who rule in accord with the art or science of statesmanship, asserts (293 D-E), "Whether they purge the state for its good by killing or banishing some of the citizens, or make it smaller by sending out colonies somewhere, as bees swarm from the hive, or bring in citizens from elsewhere to make it larger, so long as they act in accordance with science and justice and preserve and benefit it by making it better than it was, that must at that time and by such characteristics be declared to be the only right form of government."²⁴⁵

Fair interpretation of this stated principle requires at least a brief indication of the general pattern of the dialogue. The *Politicus* has set out, in true Socratic fashion, to define the statesman, but employing an elaborate logical method (*diairesis*) of Plato's own invention. Exercise in the use of this method, Plato tells us (286 D-E), is the primary purpose of the entire discussion. The atmosphere in which the dialogue moves is one of disinterested, theoretical, in short, "scientific" inquiry, focussed on a topic of broad human concern which is nothing less than what we should call the theory or science of government. For we need not be misled by Plato's use of the apparently personal term "statesman." The "man" here is really no man; he is only the postulated possessor of knowledge of a specified sort, a kind of useful fiction, like a frictionless surface or a perfectly straight edge, supplying a hypothetical standard from which measurements can be made. After several attempts to define the statesman have been exposed as inadequate, Plato has reached the point at which he is attempting to show that only the possession of knowledge of the truly good for man and the community, can serve as the defining mark (*horos*) of the true statesman. Other traditional and currently accepted criteria, such as whether rule be exercised by few or by many, over willing or unwilling subjects, or in accord or not in accord with law, are rejected as irrelevant or nonessential.²⁴⁶ In the passage just quoted, Plato is carrying to its logical extreme the test of knowledge alone. Plato does believe, as we

²⁴⁴ Popper, p. 162. Popper, however, as before, employs the unfavorable word "deport" in his translation, in place of "send out."

²⁴⁵ *Politicus*, trans. Fowler. Loeb Library.

²⁴⁶ Grote (*Plato and the Other Compan-*

ions of Socrates, 1865, vol. II, p. 478) has well observed the close parallel of this definition of the true statesman with that given by the Xenophontic Socrates, *Memo.* III, 9, 10.

know from other passages, that the actual lawgiver will be justified at times in exercising the functions of banishing or condemning citizens, but it is only with the proviso that the best available knowledge is actually his, and that he stands to profit nothing by the result of his decisions.

In seeking a just understanding of Plato's handling of this problem of political coercion, we must first introduce a distinction, and then point to a widespread characteristic of the Greek world of that time. Plato has used language which runs together two matters that we in the modern world are in the habit of keeping distinct, namely: criminal jurisprudence and political reform. In the *Politicus* passage, the sending out of colonies or the calling in of new citizens belongs obviously in the second field. Pericles, we know, made frequent use of the device of emigration, which was subsidized by the city; Popper's word "deport" again introduces sinister associations, where favorable overtones would be in order.

The "killing" and "banishing" we can not so immediately place. Popper assumes without question that it, too, belongs in the realm of political measures, signifying the removal of political dissidents; but it could equally well have no reference to such persons. Plato, as usual when he is considering the inauguration of good government, appears throughout the dialogue to be proceeding upon the assumption that the statesman is not required to struggle for his power. He is thought of as appointed for the purpose of effecting needed reforms in some existing city — like the board of commissioners mentioned at *Politicus* 300 B — or, perhaps, as was Plato himself,²⁴⁷ called upon as a recognized expert in law, to assist in the creation of a new city. Plato's language is wide enough to include among those who are to be killed and banished, what we should think of as gangsters and racketeers, the criminal population in general, particularly that part of it whose activities had not been checked by the existing imperfect laws. In reading Popper, one is never reminded of the presence in Greek society of this class of persons, of whom the orators have so much to tell.²⁴⁸ No more political motive need be seen in Plato's recommendation here than would be reasonable to find in the action of a new mayor of one of our great cities who might inaugurate his administration by urging his prosecuting attorney to redouble efforts against the vice rings.

The inclusive character of Greek law, which embraced so much moral and religious prescription, and, in dealing with a particular defendant, did not hesitate to take into account his general moral character, even his military service record, rather than to hew to the line of the particular charge, would

²⁴⁷ See Taylor, *Plato*, p. 464, where this tradition is reported. The tale records, however, that Plato refused.

²⁴⁸ See e.g., Bonner and Smith, vol. II, the chapter on sycophants *passim*, esp. p. 47. Calhoun, in his discussion of Athenian

clubs (*op. cit.*), includes a revealing section on the clubs in litigation, and describes (pp. 95-96) groups of persons whose sole business was sycophancy and venal pettifoggery.

make the task of Plato's statesman easier than is that of the modern prosecutor, who may be reduced to seeking the conviction of a notorious gangster for evading the income tax. That Plato's thinking is pervaded by this amalgamation of law and morals is illustrated by what is later said (*Politicus* 308 E-309 A) of the duty of the statesman to arrange that only such persons as are capable of achieving moral goodness shall be educated to full citizenship in the new state, the morally vicious to be banished or put to death or deprived of their chief civic rights,²⁴⁹ the morally incompetent to be reduced to the status of slaves.²⁵⁰

These are bold prescriptions, indeed, and unless applied with the greatest care likely to defeat their own high ends. We shall have occasion later to evaluate and to express our reservations regarding this kind of paternalism. But though Plato conceived the authority and the principles directing the weeding out of unfit citizens as being handed down from above, whereas we conceive them as arising from the community acting through its elected officials, we should not fail to note that the process itself is carried on in every society by its courts and the admission boards of its institutions; it is a continuous process, a necessary part of government. In the case imagined by Plato, the numbers to be rejected as future citizens need not be greater than the number usually disqualified in some fashion in any state. And Plato's statesman, like that modern sovereign the people, was to entrust to others possessing the requisite special skills the application of his principles to the concrete case (*Politicus* 305 B-C, 308 D-E).

But the contemporary conscience is likely to be troubled also by the severity of the penalties and the apparent readiness to resort to final sanctions. Our judgment of Plato in this matter must in fairness take into consideration the standards and practice of Plato's contemporaries. We are apt to think of the Athenians much as they were pleased to consider themselves, as conspicuous in their day for their humanity and kindness; and in spite of an element of exaggeration,²⁵¹ there is no reason to question its over-all correctness. But on closer view we see the necessity of recognizing some considerable exceptions. There were still survivals of the ancestral cruelties, such things as the torture of slave witnesses and, in some cases, of free men who were simply not of "pure Athenian" descent, and there was the abomination of the method of execution known as *apotympanismos*.²⁵² The great number and unimpor-

²⁴⁹ A similar view regarding the divinely-sanctioned necessity of putting to death those men who are incapable of acquiring "justice and reverence" is expressed by the *Protagoras* of Plato's dialogue of that name, 322 D.

²⁵⁰ See our remark on this passage, p. 224 above.

²⁵¹ See our pp. 151, 164.

²⁵² The torture of slaves is frequently

referred to: e.g., *Lysias* VII, 31-33. The torture of free non-Athenians is referred to in *Lysias* XIII, 25-27, 59. *Apotympanismos* is mentioned as being inflicted after the restoration of the democracy in 403, in *Lysias* XIII, 56, 65. Cf. Bonner and Smith, *The Administration of Justice from Homer to Aristotle*, 1923, vol. II, pp. 126 ff. and 279 ff.

tance of offenses for which the death sentence was invoked is disconcerting to the modern temper. The rigors of Leviticus are rivalled in such provisions of Attic law as death to the wretch who has laid a suppliant's branch on the altar at Eleusis during the seasons of the Mysteries,²⁵³ banishment and confiscation to him who rooted out the stump of a sacred olive tree (Lysias, Oration VII), and, to leave the zone of religious offenses, death as one of the penalties applicable to the Athenian citizen who sat as juryman while still owing money to the city.²⁵⁴ Enslavement might legally be visited by an irate father, even at Athens, upon an unchaste daughter, and slavery was also the penalty awaiting the non Athenian found living as husband or wife to an Athenian citizen.²⁵⁵ Looked at in this context, Plato's statesman, with his apparent readiness to kill, banish, and enslave, where we should prescribe either the penitentiary, at one end, or psychiatric social service, at the other, loses much of his sanguinary coloration.

But what if among those who are to be killed and banished are included political opponents, as such, of the program of the "true statesman"? Plato's language does not exclude this possibility. We have already remarked upon the freedom with which leaders of the political opposition were regarded by the victorious party in the Greek cities as outright enemies, to be treated accordingly. But as we have also shown, there is good reason to believe that Plato was not infected with this cultural brutality. And in the *Politicus*, the statesman is regarded as a mediator, perhaps an outsider, without personal stake in the outcome and not involved in the enmities and bitterness of the parties. If he banishes or puts to death those whose continued presence will endanger the success of the new constitution, he is exercising a function which neither we, nor in other passages, Plato,²⁵⁶ would entrust to any individual, but he is at least acting on disinterested principle. And in granting to his ideal statesman this power, if he does so grant it, Plato is not approving its exercise against fellow citizens by the all too human Athenians whom circumstance might have endowed with arbitrary mastery.

But must we with Popper believe that the highly magnified statesman is none other than Plato himself? We shall return in a later chapter to the ques-

²⁵³ See Moses Hadas, *History of Greek Literature*, 1950, p. 163.

²⁵⁴ Cited in Paul Vinogradoff, *Outlines of Historical Jurisprudence*, 1922, vol. II, p. 188; from Dem. xxi, 182. Vinogradoff also cites several fragments from Democritus (Diels, Frs. 257-260) in which it is interesting to find that thinker using the analogy of destroying noxious beasts and reptiles to justify the killing of criminals and other enemies of the community.

²⁵⁵ On the sale of a daughter, Glotz, p. 193, on the fate of the pretended Athenian

spouse, [Dem.] lix, 16-17. Aristotle's *Constitution of Athens*, ch. 42, has been commonly understood to declare that any eighteen year old claimant to citizenship disqualified by the official examiners as of partly non Athenian origin was also enslaved. Gomme, however, has sought ("Two Problems in Athenian Citizenship Law," 1934) to interpret Aristotle as testifying only that Athens thus sold into slavery youths shown to be of partly servile birth.

²⁵⁶ Eg., *Laws* 875 A-D.

tion of how far and in what sense Plato considered himself to be possessed of the philosophic wisdom whose saving power for the Greek world he so often celebrated. In this place, we can only say that there is no evidence to indicate that Plato, confronted with an actual occasion in which philosophic rule appeared attainable only at the cost of violence, would have accorded himself the right to intervene—particularly if such violence would have been directed against his fellow citizens. Nowhere in his writings, even in the most remote region of supposition, does he contemplate such action. On the evidence, we must suppose that he would have awaited that more propitious hour which haunted his imagination, when some person or small group of persons, already in possession of recognized and stable power, should extend him an opportunity to offer his disinterested counsel. And if to these considerations we add what light the letters throw upon him in his hour of decision during the Sicilian adventures, we may conclude, with as much certainty as the nature of the case admits, that throughout his life Plato adhered consistently to his high principle of restraint.

In the *Laws* occurs a discussion, parallel to the passages in the *Politicus* which we have been discussing, but with some interesting differences of aim and emphasis. Here (*Laws* 735 A–737 B) there is no question of defining the lawgiver and finding his ideal nature; the legislator (or legislative commissioner) is conceived as neither necessarily all-wise nor all-powerful; he is, one may say, whatever responsible person possessing knowledge of statecraft he may happen to be, and Plato is simply describing one of the functions which he must perform to the extent of his power. We hear again of the necessity of culling out from the human flock the undesirables, before proceeding with the founding of a new city or the reform of an existing one. This a tyrant-legislator may do in an already established community, by the drastic methods of death and banishment of the incurably bad, useful methods not available to others. (It is worth noting that Plato, relying, perhaps, upon his reader's familiarity with his earlier expositions, does not pause here to make the all-important distinction between the tyrant as such, the very nadir of morality, and the gifted and uncorrupted young tyrant, of whom he hoped so much.) Weeding out by colonization is proposed: the dangerously disaffected poor, on the brink of revolutionary violence, may be encouraged to leave town in this fashion.²⁵⁷ As to the more deserving poor, landless and crushed by a burden of debt to the great landowners, the legislative reformer must offer them aid. Outright confiscation or cancellation of debts is disallowed; the method recommended, a practice apparently falling somewhat on the hither

²⁵⁷ At *Laws* 740 E, Plato again refers to the possibility that colonists may have to be sent out, this time after the establishment of the city, in the event that the citizens become too numerous for the available

land allotments. Again he speaks of the process, not at all as a deportation, but as "the sending forth, in friendly wise from a friendly nation" (trans. Bury, Loeb Library) of suitable persons.

side of social realism, but one which had been exemplified in the Greek world, is piecemeal voluntary resigning, by the rich, of their excess of land and credit in favor of the dispossessed.²⁵⁸ In this passage, as in the *Politicus*, the central topic of discussion is not the elimination of political enemies; the standard of "good citizen" is severely moral, or perhaps, we should say, penological. Where political reform is in view, as in the case of the revolutionary or landless poor, the measures advocated are not violent, and are directed to secure, in some degree, the interest of these persons themselves, as well as the good of the state as a whole. In both passages, there is evidence of Plato's participation in the general Greek attitude of severity toward the criminal, and of Plato's own scientific-authoritarian viewpoint in government. In neither is there indication of Plato's approval of revolutionary violence directed to the imposition by force of any sort of ideal state.

One of Popper's most extravagant assertions is that Plato had viewed as a "favorable circumstance" the presence in Athens of Spartan troops, summoned to assist the Thirty in maintaining themselves and their iniquitous regime²⁵⁹ and had felt no other emotion than approval at the thought of Athens beneath the Spartan yoke; he would have been prepared, we are led

²⁵⁸ This same end is to be made effective in the new city of the *Laws* by legislation preventing any citizen from selling his land, and setting a ceiling on individual wealth. All these measures, whether practical or not, show Plato's unwillingness to accept the *de facto* enslavement of any class of citizens to another class — something which Popper by his identification of Plato with the Old Oligarch most flagrantly ignores.

For an instance of the voluntary resignation of property rights in favor of the poor, see Aristotle's *Politics*, VI, 1320 b 9 ff., where it is reported of the Tarentines that "they gain the good will of the populace by sharing the use of their property with the poor." I am indebted for this citation to Minar, *Early Pythagorean Politics*, 1942; p. 90. It may be added here that Minar is at one with Winspear (cf. App. I, p. 583; p. 247) in interpreting the Pythagoreans as by no means essentially religious or philosophical-minded, but as a sort of international conspiracy of political conservatism dedicated to upholding, in the name of religion, the ideal of government by landed aristocrats; he agrees with Winspear also in seeing Plato's political thought as anticipated at most essential points by the Pythagoreans. The first of these theses, which rests largely on a tendency to inter-

pret ideologies as determined directly by class interest, plus the contention that the most influential Pythagoreans were aristocrats, is at variance with the view of the school generally taken by scholars in the field; see the reviews of Minar's study, *Am. Hist. Review*, XLIX, 1943, p. 870 f., by W. A. Oldfather, and *Pol. Sci. Q.*, LVIII, 1943, p. 304, by Kurt von Fritz. The second thesis presupposes the authenticity of late and probably spurious Pythagorean treatises which contain Platonic and Aristotelian ideas. One must also object to such a passage as that on pp. 103-104, where Plato's provisions in the *Laws* that private citizens shall act as public prosecutors are depicted solely as parallels to the cynically interpreted Pythagorean justification of enmity to lawbreakers, and to the Spartan system of spying on the Helots. The real parallel is clearly with the Athenian public suit, brought by an interested citizen (cf. the *graphê hybreôs*, mentioned on p. 151 above). Minar's theory of economic determinism, combined with his reasonable dislike of government by a cynically self-interested aristocracy of birth and wealth, seems thus to have led him to join Winspear in misplaced suspicions of Plato's political ideals.

²⁵⁹ Popper, p. 190.

to suppose, to summon them again, if their presence could aid him in achieving his neo oligarchical revolution. There is no text which Popper can cite in support of such a charge, it arises solely from his picture of Plato as a third head upon the double headed monster whom he has created, called "the Old Oligarch and Critias", it is guilt by association, the very ultimate example of the witch hunt technique. Plato's pride as an Athenian,²⁶⁰ and his obvious friendly contempt for the ordinary Spartan illiterate,²⁶¹ joined with his serious philosophic conviction that the Spartan training aimed only at a part of virtue and failed to inculcate self command in the face of temptation to license and brutality,²⁶² would have made him bridle at the very notion of subordinating Athenian institutions to Spartan control. And once more, such an act would have contravened that refusal to employ armed might to the attainment of desired ends, against which he had so definitely set his face.

And here, with apparent inappropriateness, we must consider the treatment proposed for atheists in the tenth book of the *Laws*. Before considering the extent of Plato's guilt in this matter, we wish to enter a strong protest against what we feel to be Popper's unfair tactic of introducing this topic in the degrading context of "brutal violence" and in the shadow of implied oligarchic leanings.²⁶³ One is tempted to remind Popper, at this point, that the death penalty for atheism was no innovation of revolutionary oligarchs, and that with slight verbal exaggeration one might more properly style it a 'good old Athenian democratic custom' to which Plato reverted in his old age. And as to the suggestion that it is comparable to the arbitrary and illegal executions for convenience and profit committed by the Thirty, be it remembered that Plato has not proposed that summary violence be applied to the disbeliever. On the contrary, the laws dealing with religious offenses of this class are made part of the fundamental legislation of the city. There is, first of all, the "prelude" to the law itself, by far the most elaborately thought out of all these persuasive introductions by which Plato hopes to establish a spirit of friendly

²⁶⁰ In the *Laws* Plato praises the older Athens as we have seen and indicates his belief that good Athenians are very good (698 B ff. 642 C). In the *Menexenus* we have parallel praise of the Athens of Marathon and also much patriotic celebration of Athenian prowess and service in the cause of Greek freedom down to and including the peace of Antalcidas. In the *Menexenus* (244 C-D) also there is evidence of a feeling of bitterness against Sparta who has not only failed to match the magnanimity of Athens but has meanly deprived Athens of her walls and fleet in 404 B.C. These expressions of patriotic feeling are in the *Menexenus* and therefore not necessarily dependable at face value. They are con-

sistent and continuous however with the attitude toward the events at the time of Marathon which we know from the *Laws* to be Plato's own. In the *Timaeus* (24 C-D) Plato makes the Egyptian priest declare the climate of Attica best fitted to produce men of supreme wisdom who should also be good warriors.

²⁶¹ The Spartan lack of cultivation is made matter for jest at *Protagoras* 342 A ff.

²⁶² At *Laws* 633 D begins a long discussion tending to show the deficiencies of the Cretan and Spartan laws in these respects. Similar views are expressed in *Republic* 548 E-519 B. See pp. 510f. below.

²⁶³ Popper pp. 189-194-195.

side of social realism, but one which had been exemplified in the Greek world, is piecemeal voluntary resigning, by the rich, of their excess of land and credit in favor of the dispossessed.²⁵⁸ In this passage, as in the *Politicus*, the central topic of discussion is not the elimination of political enemies; the standard of "good citizen" is severely moral, or perhaps, we should say, penological. Where political reform is in view, as in the case of the revolutionary or landless poor, the measures advocated are not violent, and are directed to secure, in some degree, the interest of these persons themselves, as well as the good of the state as a whole. In both passages, there is evidence of Plato's participation in the general Greek attitude of severity toward the criminal, and of Plato's own scientific-authoritarian viewpoint in government. In neither is there indication of Plato's approval of revolutionary violence directed to the imposition by force of any sort of ideal state.

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²⁵⁹ Popper, p. 190.

must not allow our imaginations to be excited by Popper's word "inquisition," and especially by his ambiguous use of the phrase "the 'treatment,'" referring to the discussions and admonitions employed by the councilors. There is nothing in Plato's text to suggest cruelty, no hint of thumbscrews and the rack, nor of the more modern techniques of forced confession.²⁶⁶ Plato's

though demanding public conformity and on occasion actively persecuting the open dissemination of irreligion or of doctrines thought conducive thereto (cf. p. 315 and n. 195, p. 324).

(2) Plato and Athens are alike in employing no harsh methods to elicit confession, inflicting no cruel punishments on those condemned.

(3) Both Plato and Athens provided public trials in the regular courts, with no special disabilities imposed on the accused.

(4) Plato in the method he prescribes for selecting the judges and in the procedure laid down for the conduct of the trials has sought to supply fuller protection than Athens afforded against hasty and unjust condemnation for all persons accused of capital crimes, including impiety.

It must also be noted that the minimum religious creed which Plato prescribes under penalty is a form of theism immeasurably more rational and ethical than the crude polytheistic cult to which Athens required conformity.

The relation between Plato, Athens, and the Inquisition may now be summarily stated, under the same numbered headings.

(1) On this point Plato will be found closer to the Inquisition than to Athens, since he will penalize inconspicuous impiety and privately expressed disbelief; yet he constructs no such machinery as was available to the Inquisition for invading the privacy of every man's conscience and ferreting out secret heresies.

(2) and (3) On both these points, Plato's kinship is with Athens, his distance from the Inquisition immense.

(4) Here Plato has attempted to do better than Athens; the Inquisition with its closed hearings and the all but unbounded discretion it assigned to the Inquisitors fell vastly below Plato's juridical level.

A further gap between Plato and the Inquisition is found in Plato's principled refusal to impose confiscation of property,

with its entailed injustice to the families of persons condemned, as a penalty for any serious crime, and his care explicitly to exempt the children of condemned atheists from suffering any disability; the Inquisition, as is notorious, made great use of confiscation.

References in the *Laws* for these statements include those given in the preceding note, and for the scrupulousness toward descendants, 909 C-D, 856 C-D.

On balance, then, Athens, Plato, and the Inquisition all persecute religious dissenters and nonconformists, but differ in the degree and manner of this persecution. In (1) above, we find Plato less liberal than Athens and closer to the Inquisition; he falls below Athens, also, in not allowing such milder penalties as exile. In (2) and (3) he resembles Athens. In (4) he rises or attempts to rise above both. In the quality of the creed he imposes and in his care to exempt the innocent, he outstrips now one, now the other. If Plato is to be called the father of the Inquisition, he is also both for good and for evil the son of Athens.

²⁶⁶ The implications of Popper's invective terms, here as in other cases (e.g., "liquidation" and "brutal violence") have not failed of being caught by such a reader as Sherwood Anderson, who, demonstrably under Popper's spell, accuses Plato of proposing to employ "assassination" and "torture"; cf. our n. 19, p. 24. Nor should we permit modern sentiment to obscure the fact that Plato himself regarded the proposed death penalty as mild: he consistently teaches that death is the "least of evils," and in the case of the incurable offender, beneficial even to the man himself (*Laws* 862 E). For Plato, the honest disbeliever is "just" in terms of his own belief in what is best (for the inconsistency in Plato's thought on this point, see pp. 526-27); but being mistaken, "ignorant," on matters of the highest importance, he is none the less a wrong-doer, and harmful to himself and others.

understanding between the citizen and the laws under which he is to live. In the present case, the prelude amounts to a substantial essay in natural theology, seeking to prove the existence of the gods, their inflexible justice never to be swayed by sacrifice or prayers, and their providential control of the universe, extending to the last detail. This preamble, which its author evidently regarded as constituting a clear and irrefragable demonstration, is the rational basis upon which the legislator proceeds.²⁶⁴ We are not here concerned with details, but the following points require note: Plato provides for those accused of impiety public trials of three days' length before the city's highest court, corresponding roughly to the Athenian Areopagus. The law recognizes the occurrence of virtuous and candid atheists, as well as those who are hypocritical and vicious. The latter are confined, upon conviction, to lifelong isolated imprisonment in the penitentiary—to Plato's mind, the harshest of penalties. The good atheists are more considerately dealt with. For five years or more, they are reprieved, and during this time are confined to the reformatory, and there visited by the enlightened members of the Night Council, which is so named from the time (before sunrise) prescribed for its meetings, and is no secret, black, and irresponsible conclave, but is composed, in effect, of the teachers and students of jurisprudence and philosophy in the state (*Laws* 951 D ff., 961 A ff.). The councilors endeavor by all rational means to turn disbelievers from the path of error. If these suasions are successful, the reformed atheists are restored to their normal membership in the community; if not, they are put to death.²⁶⁵ And here we

²⁶⁴ *Laws* 907 D ff., and for the court, 855 C ff., 767 C-E.

²⁶⁵ It is interesting to notice the similarities and differences between Plato and a thinker who stood much under his influence, Rousseau. In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau also would condemn atheists, sharing Plato's conviction that God and the immortality of the soul are realities beyond dispute, and belief in them the necessary foundation of the moral life and of the community. The great difference is that Rousseau would give admitted atheists the right to go into voluntary exile, reserving death for those who conceal their disbelief. That Plato did not make the same provision is regrettable, but is explicable enough in view of the fact that the penal legislation of the *Laws*, unlike that of Athens, apparently contemplates the exile of citizens only in cases of homicide (the comedian of 935 E-936 A may be thought of, like the tragedian of 817 A f., as a noncitizen). Presumably, however, those who were accused of atheism could, like

those accused of murder, choose to escape abroad rather than to stand trial.

A further comparison between Plato, Athens, and the Inquisition of Christian centuries will help to dispel the unjustified notion that Plato is to be considered the originator of persecutions for heresy, in a sense entirely distinct from Athenian precedent and basically identical with the methods and aims of the Inquisition. We start from the uncontested fact that both Plato and Athens in some sense countenanced religious persecution. Our further comparison of these two may be disposed under four chief headings, as follows.

(1) Plato, as elsewhere in his legislation and with even greater intensity in this general area (cf p 190, above), wishes to ensure that his laws shall be fully enforced, and intends, we may assume, to penalize even the private and inconspicuous expression of disbelief or disrespect; Athens, with secular unconcern, in general took no note of privately expressed disbelief,

that city engaged in a war worthy of her, and of "achievements . . . answerable to her education and training both in deeds of war and in diplomatic intercourse with various cities."^{27a} One may well feel that Plato could never have entrusted such a commission to anyone but one with whose standpoint and values he felt himself in cordial sympathy. Were these conditions satisfied by Critias? And if so, what becomes of the sincerity of Plato's idealistic program, with its radical condemnation of oligarchic violence? There are two ways of escape from this dilemma.

We may, with Burnet and Taylor,²⁷¹ return to a closer scrutiny of the opening pages of the *Timaeus* and find reason to doubt that the Critias there presented is one and the same with the tyrant Critias who was Plato's uncle, and cause for identifying him instead with that Critias' grandfather, an otherwise all but unknown older contemporary of Socrates who might have fought at Marathon. A major argument supporting this view is based on a substantial error in the chronology of Plato's family tree inseparable from the assumption that the Critias here introduced is indeed the tyrant. At *Timaeus* 21 B, "Critias"

²⁷⁰ Quoted from Taylor's translation, *Plato: Timaeus and Critias*, 1929, 19 C.

²⁷¹ The identification of the Critias of the *Timaeus* as the grandfather of Critias the tyrant, apparently first made by Burnet (*Greek Philosophy from Thales to Plato*, 1914), is discussed in some detail by A. E. Taylor, in his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, 1928, pp. 23-25. In the dialogue, "Critias" says that when he was ten years old, a time at which the poems of Solon were "new," he recited from these poems in the presence of his grandfather Critias, who was then close on ninety, whereupon this grandfather told him a tale which he had himself heard as a child from Solon, his father's friend and kinsman. If we take the customary view, and regard the Critias of the dialogue as the tyrant, of course the references made by Socrates to his literary gifts are appropriate enough. But this Critias was born somewhere near 450 B.C. (he was about the same age as Alcibiades), and would therefore have been ten years old in 440, hardly a time when Solon's poems were new. The grandfather would then have been born in 530, whereas Solon died ca. 558 B.C. On the other hypothesis, the Critias of the dialogue is himself about ninety. He was ten, therefore, in about 500, at which time the Peisistratid tyranny had been recently expelled, and the poems of Solon, presumably not current during the tyranny, would have been but newly revived. This supposition, therefore, saves the

chronology. A second strong argument derives from the distinct impression of venerable age which is conveyed by the Critias of the dialogue; his stress on the clarity with which he remembers the events of his long-ago childhood is important here. As justification for the praise bestowed by Socrates upon the Critias of the dialogue, Taylor and Burnet assign to the elder Critias authorship of some of the literary fragments which have come down under the name of Critias, and interpret as referring to the older man two comments on "Critias" in Aristotle. These arguments lend some support to the main contention, but in themselves are of slight importance. In short, it appears that the Taylor supposition receives its substantial support from the error demonstrably present in Plato's genealogy, if the Critias be taken as the tyrant, and from the dramatic depiction of the Critias of the dialogue as advanced in age; and it suffers from the substantial disadvantage that the elder Critias, though we know in either case that he existed, is otherwise unknown to have achieved personal distinction.

Dorothy Stephens in her doctoral dissertation, *Critias, Life and Literary Remains*, 1939, pp. 4-5, after careful consideration of the evidence, reaches the conclusion that the Burnet-Taylor view is "unquestionably" correct. It would be premature, however, to regard the point as definitely settled.

inclusion of honest atheists among those worthy of the death sentence remains, even when presented in its fairest light, a matter not for lame justification by his adulating admirers, but for sincere regret. But without retracting anything of our dissent, we think that our survey of the facts of the case reveals that the law of death to atheists is neither a repudiation of the enlightened practice of Athenian democracy, nor an endorsement of oligarchic violence, nor a barbarous anticipation of medieval cruelty. Nor is it, as Popper has elsewhere implied, an expression of doubtful sincerity, by one who perhaps was himself a greater atheist, of a wish to restrain "other (lesser) atheists" in the interests of the master class.²⁶⁷ It is, instead, the consequence of an excessive strength of conviction on Plato's part, and an excessive trust in the persuasive power of patient philosophic argument to turn honest but misguided souls about toward the light.

(5) Critias. In Plato's favorable allusions to his uncle Critias, both Fite²⁶⁸ and Popper²⁶⁹ have found sinister confirmation of Plato's sympathy with oligarchic violence. Accordingly, we must devote more attention to the charge of Plato's unreserved admiration for Critias than its inherent incredibility warrants, particularly because there are not wanting circumstances which, when regarded with a jaundiced eye, have some real chance of doing serious injury to Plato's reputation.

We may pass lightly over those nonpolitical evidences of Plato's friendly judgment of Critias as a younger man, which we noticed in the course of our earlier discussion of Plato's family pride. It would be merely arbitrary to insist that Plato should have gone out of his way by introducing condemnation in advance, any more than in the case of Alcibiades, of the wrongs that Critias and Charmides were scheduled later to commit. But the situation is different with a passage in a much later dialogue, the *Timaeus*, the political implications of which are unmistakable.

We have there (19 C-20 B) to do with a very substantial compliment paid by the Socrates of the dialogue to a character named Critias, who is said to be "no layman in these matters," that is, war, diplomatics, and philosophy, with an implied inclusion of the gifts of poetry and eloquence. Plainly, he is a distinguished gentleman, for whom Socrates-Plato cherishes a high regard. How great is this regard we can infer from the importance of the task assigned him: he is to be permitted to satisfy the wish of Socrates to have the citizens of the ideal Republic brought to life and action, in a narrative description of

²⁶⁷ Popper, pp. 140-141. It is, as often, difficult to cite fairly what Popper has said, since he has so intricately compounded straightforward accusation with a show of generosity which, in turn, leads into further accusation. If anyone will read carefully the paragraphs at the foot of p. 140 and the two at the top of p. 141, he will see

that the admission that there "may" be some genuine religious feeling in Plato, is promptly neutralized by the assertion that it is in all cases subordinated to "political opportunism" and to strengthening "the rule of the master class."

²⁶⁸ Fite, p. 132.

²⁶⁹ See p. 248 above.

end of such a career, have put Critias in the honored seat of an elder statesman — the same Plato, moreover, who had written the condemnation contained in the *Apology* of the deeds of the Thirty? One or other of two possible answers must, we think, be adopted.

It is possible that in the *Timaeus*, as in the *Charmides*, Plato was asking his readers to think historically or dramatically, in terms of the implied date of the conversation reported, and thus to think of a Critias yet unembittered by exile and uncorrupted by power, in short, the Critias that he himself no doubt remembered from the now far off and happy Socratic season of his youth. The *Timaeus*, we saw, unless we make the assumption that it presents the older Critias, is extremely careless of chronology, and even if we assume a relatively early dramatic date, the younger Critias might be supposed to have had a sufficient military and political record, combined with his substantial achievements in letters, to justify, with some exaggeration, the commendation of his claims in these respects. In those times Critias had been the gifted and apparently high-principled man whom Socrates had honored with his friendship.²⁷³ Plato must, then, have believed that in the interval Critias had been radically corrupted, perhaps as a result of that process vividly described in the *Republic* (565 B-C), whereby those who were at first not plotting against the democratic constitution are converted, by the constant accusation that they are oligarchs, into oligarchs in very truth, or in consequence of the exiled years in that lawless Thessaly of which Socrates had spoken so disparagingly in the *Crito* (53 D). Looking backward, Plato might well have discovered the seeds of this corruption even before the exile, in Critias' period of service as popular leader, an activity which, as we know from the *Gorgias* (512 E-513 B) and from the *Republic* (492 B-D, 493 D), Plato regarded as morally perilous in high degree. To this we may add the conviction we have earlier cited from the *Laws* (875 A-D) and which may also be quoted from the *Gorgias* (526 A): "A difficult thing it is, Callicles, and worthy of all praise, to reach a position of great power to do wrong, and to live one's life through in justice, and few indeed achieve this."

²⁷³ An unprejudiced reading of the surviving fragments of Critias (Diels, 1922, vol. II, p. 308ff.), after exposure to Popper's comments upon them, should awaken surprise and suspicion of Popper's judgments. The twin charges of "treacherous pro-Spartan leanings as well as . . . oligarchic outlook" (p. 594) are discovered to rest, so far as Popper cites his evidence, solely upon Critias' indictment (Diels, Fr. 45) of Athenian democratic leaders, e.g., Themistocles and Cleon, for self-enrichment during office, a charge which in itself may be partisan and unjust but which has nothing to do with treachery or Sparta; the "ambition" rests

upon the verses (Diels; fr. 15) in which, like Horace in the first of his Odes, the poet briefly describes the many several ideals of human felicity, noble birth, wealth, etc., and concludes with a declaration of his own preference for "the credit of fair fame"; the "blunt nihilism" is grounded on the supposititious cynicism of the verses concerning the origin of religion, of which we earlier (n. 72, p. 273) disposed. We do know from Critias' later history that he was infected with most of these faults, but it is not the case that they are to be discovered, as Popper has said, in his "extant writings."

is made to say that his grandfather had learned from Solon, who in turn had heard from the Egyptian priests, a tale of ancient Athens, as she had been before a great flood which had destroyed the civilization of those days in Greece. A little arithmetic applied to this situation reveals that the grandfather of Critias the tyrant, at the time of Solon's death, was and would for some 25-30 more years remain unborn. Could Plato have made so gross an error in recounting an incident in the history of his own family, that family of which he was (we saw) rather pathetically proud? The anomaly is removed by the simple assumption, supported by further considerations of internal evidence, that we have here a case of mistaken identity, and that the Critias of the *Timaeus* is, appropriately enough, a very old man, linking his hearers in imagination to a very remote period verging on the legendary past. And so Plato has drawn him for us, depicting a man of dignity, who moreover lays stress on the very long time that has passed since he heard the tale, which he recollects with the clarity characteristic of the bright impressions of childhood (*Timaeus* 26 A-C). If Taylor and Burnet be judged to have made their case, the detractors have, *pro tanto*, lost theirs. But we dare not build upon this conclusion, favorable as it is to our interest, while reasonable doubt of its validity remains.

We must, therefore, consider the alternative possibility that "Critias" was Critias Tyrannus. Our knowledge of this man's political misdeeds derives principally from Xenophon's *Hellenica* and *Memorabilia*, reinforced by the orations of Lysias.⁷² From these sources, enough evidence is available against Critias to procure his hanging in effigy before the most merciful court of historians. Once a popular leader and supporter of Alcibiades, his criminal career dates from his return from exile in Thessaly, along with his fellow oligarchs of the extreme persuasion, after the fall of Athens in 404, his heart burning with the hate of the accursed demos that had exiled him. Chosen one of the Thirty, who were originally a provisional government appointed with Spartan approval to draft a reformed constitution for Athens, the so-called "constitution of our fathers," he forced his way to the head of those least willing to employ constitutional methods. We hear of the summoning of a Spartan garrison, under whose protection he and his fellow extremists carried out a reckless program of confiscation and killing, including the murder of advocates of moderation within their own party (e.g., Theramenes), the execution of wealthy metics on false charges for their money, and the mass murder of the citizens at Eleusis. He met his end, after five months of misrule, fighting against the democratic forces led by Thrasybulus. This, then, is the man, and this his policy, that we are asked to put morally equal to the author of the *Republic*. This is the final underlining of our riddle: how could Plato, subsequent to the

⁷² *Hellenica* II, iii, II-56; iv, 1-19. *Memorabilia* I, ii, 12-39; Lysias, XII, 43-45, 55; XIII, 59.

the *Republic* by adding together the higher education of the Guardians and Plato's statement that even a single philosophic inheritor of absolute power would suffice to realize the ideal city.

In the discussion to follow, we shall hope to present evidence sufficient to disprove these particular charges; it will also become apparent in the process that the founding of the Academy was not, as Popper conceives it, a crime against the freedom of the human mind,²⁷⁶ but a memorable step in the progress of higher education and a credit to the intelligence and conscience of its founder. Materials for reconstructing a full, circumstantial account of life at the Academy are not available. But inferences sufficient for our more modest purpose may be drawn not alone from the Platonic writings but also from references in fourth-century literature, eked out by cautious use of traditions surviving in later writers.

Whoever might wish to prove that the founding of the Academy was inspired by a desire to engage in oligarchic conspiracies, or to impose philosophic rule upon Athens or Greece at large, might appeal to the passage in the Seventh Letter (325 D-326 B) where Plato (if it is he) declares that in the lack of "friends and trusty associates" he was forced to abandon his earlier hope of active participation in politics and of improvement in the Athenian government, and that he came finally to declare the impossibility of governmental reform in general until philosophic wisdom should be united with political power. This statement appears to leave open the question of revolutionary intent. The question, however, is decisively closed later in the same letter (331 C-D) by the declaration, previously mentioned, that a man should stand ready to advise but must never offer violence to his native city. If, then, we are to use this letter as a key to Plato's purpose, we shall be within our rights in arguing that the Academy was not intended to serve as a headquarters for revolution,

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134. An instructive instance of Popper's temperamental readiness to condemn *in toto* whatever is in his eyes infected with any degree of fault, is provided by his rather extraordinary feat of crediting Plato with the invention of "both our secondary schools and our universities," only in order to discredit both him and them. "This devastating system of education," he declares, offers the best proof of basic human decency in the bare fact that it "has not utterly ruined" all its victims. Plato, he asks us to note, proposed to select the "best" from among the students in his ideal city to serve as rulers, and, Popper implies, designed and operated the Academy along similar lines. By so doing, he has vitiated all subsequent institutions of learning, substituting crude "personal ambition" as the student's motive in studying, for "a

real love . . . of inquiry," and stifling originality by causing students to be judged in terms of conformity to the opinions of those in authority. We are in accord with Popper's view that universities should not select rulers; universities today, it is also agreed, have not solved the problem of separating their accrediting function from their function in teaching and stimulating. But these objections do not appear to justify the wholesale condemnation either of the existing institutions or of the act of their originator in summoning them into existence. Nor is it proved that Plato's educational principles led in his own practice to the ill consequences which Popper believes their inevitable outcome; see App. XII, p. 619, where reference is made to Cherniss' proof of Plato's wide tolerance of dissent among the members of his Academy.

We have still to consider the second possibility: Plato may not have believed that Critias ever really became the monster of iniquity that Xenophon and Lysias have painted. To employ a little freedom of psychological interpretation, we may point out that a too loyal admirer of one charged with grave wrongdoing is confronted with a choice between bringing himself to accept wrong as right — this would be Popper's supposition — and believing that somehow the admired person was not guilty of the wrong. One way in which Plato could have accomplished this latter feat is suggested by a passage in the *Politics* (1305 b 26) in which Aristotle asserts that Charicles, another of the Thirty whom both Xenophon and Lysias link with Critias as particularly influential, made himself the predominant member of the group by exercising a species of demagogic skill upon them. This statement of Aristotle contains no specification of date and makes no mention of Critias (indeed, Aristotle makes no mention whatever of Critias' activities as one of the Thirty); we have, therefore, little to guide us to a conclusion here; and unless Xenophon is wholly wrong, Critias cannot be substantially cleared. Nevertheless, it is possible that Plato may have persuaded himself that Critias was acting under the compulsive direction of Charicles, and was thus led into deeds contrary to his own will. One should note that both of these alternatives are in accord with the evidence of the *Seventh Letter*, and of the *Apology*, which condemn unequivocally the actions of the Thirty, but without specification of persons.

Our conclusion then would be: Plato in the *Timaeus* is either praising the tyrant's grandfather, or else commending a Critias either not yet, or (to Plato's fond belief) never destined of his own will to become a tyrant. To which we may add that one decisive fact is clear beyond contest: whoever the Critias of the *Timaeus* was or became, Plato does not make him an occasion for commending or justifying tyrannic rule.

There remains unexplored in our treatment of Plato's relation to the Athenian political scene and that of Greek politics generally, an area of his activity to which political significance may have attached, his direction of his famous Academy. The detractors have unhesitatingly ascribed to it this meaning. Crossman regards the Academy as "an 'open conspiracy' to clean up Greek politics," Plato's instrument for converting young aristocrats "into statesmen who voluntarily submitted to the law of reason" and who were then, so Plato hoped, to be "vested with absolute power in the cities of Greece."²⁷⁴ Popper holds essentially the same view, but with more bitterness and less concession to the rationality of Plato's aims, remarking that not a few of Plato's chosen candidates for absolute power later became tyrants.²⁷⁵ Neither critic offers any documentation of this view of the Academy, which they derive apparently from

²⁷⁴ Crossman, pp. 116, 125-126.

²⁷⁵ Popper, pp. 134-135. Cf. our note 291, p. 370 below.

the *Republic* by adding together the higher education of the Guardians and Plato's statement that even a single philosophic inheritor of absolute power would suffice to realize the ideal city.

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²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134. An instructive instance of Popper's temperamental readiness to condemn *in toto* whatever is in his eyes infected with any degree of fault, is provided by his rather extraordinary feat of crediting Plato with the invention of "both our secondary schools and our universities," only in order to discredit both him and them. "This devastating system of education," he declares, offers the best proof of basic human decency in the bare fact that it "has not utterly ruined" all its victims. Plato, he asks us to note, proposed to select the "best" from among the students in his ideal city to serve as rulers, and, Popper implies, designed and operated the Academy along similar lines. By so doing, he has vitiated all subsequent institutions of learning, substituting crude "personal ambition" as the student's motive in studying, for "a

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either at Athens or elsewhere, but as a little colony of peaceful men, fitted to offer sound advice on political affairs, or to support the responsibility of public office, by reason of their possession of true philosophy.

The dialogues are, of course, our best means of discovering what, for Plato, was the promise of that philosophy which the Academy was designed to propagate. The *Phaedrus* describes the finished dialectician and master of rightly directed speech, who can both distinguish and combine, teach and persuade, and who "has knowledge of the just and the good and the beautiful."²⁷⁷ Such a man, Plato declares in a passage of great depth of conviction (276 E-277 A) "employs the dialectic method and . . . sows in a fitting soul intelligent words . . . which are not fruitless but yield seed from which there spring up in other minds other words capable of continuing the process forever, and which make their possessor happy, to the farthest possible limit of human happiness."²⁷⁸ This citation expresses *in nuce*, as we shall hold, Plato's aim in establishing and maintaining his school throughout the years. Such teaching found its initial application to the private individual, who, if endowment and effort sufficed, was to be brought simultaneously to become good and to know the good (for Plato never admitted that the two, in the highest sense of each, could be kept apart). Again in the *Republic* we encounter the just man and private citizen of an ordinary Greek state, who (591 C ff.) will establish first and guard as his chief treasure the order in his soul, and will participate in the politics of his unregenerate home city only by some providential chance; such a man (496 E), we have already heard, "will take his departure with fair hope, serene and well content when the end comes," though he may have been compelled to spend his whole life in retirement. Education for such a life the Academy would certainly supply.

And concurrently, by the self-same training, the Academy aimed also to fit its pupils for political life, since, on Plato's view, the just man in private life was also the man best fitted to direct affairs of state. The master of true rhetoric, in the *Phaedrus*, we cannot doubt is such a man. The whole *Republic* may be said to assert that the just man, the philosopher, if conditions permit, will serve best both his own and his country's highest interest by taking public office. And the same identity of qualification is asserted, as we shall see, throughout the dialogues. We may then truly call the Academy from its very beginning a school of politics, but only in this highly Platonic sense.

We have also the testimony of one of Plato's contemporaries, Isocrates, who has reported to us from his own known standpoint how the Platonic Academy appeared to him in its bearing upon political life. As head of a competing school, he may be trusted to have been well acquainted with the general character of the educational program of his distinguished rival. It is, therefore,

²⁷⁷ *Phaedrus*, 266 D-E, 271 D-272 B, 276 C.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 276 E-277 A, trans. Fowler, Loeb Library.

of considerable interest to find that his most serious objection to that program was precisely its impractical and unpolitical character, its insistence upon argumentation and mathematics, which, if long pursued, Isocrates believes, must "ossify" the mind, and its neglect of those realities of daily living and the contemporary political scene which, he does not hesitate to let us know, are best learned in his own school.²⁷⁹

Searching for more concrete indications of the conduct of Plato's school, its methods and subject matter, we find that for the earlier years of the Academy our sources are disappointing. It has been suggested that Plato turned to educational purposes in his Academy a regulated conviviality, less exuberant, we may suppose, than that depicted in his *Symposium*, and resembling more closely the sedate spirit underlying the prescriptions for the use of wine in the *Laws*.²⁸⁰ Few would dispute the probability that the curriculum proposed for the higher education of the Guardians in the *Republic* is an idealized reflection of that followed in the Academy, with adaptations dictated by the difference between the actual and the ideal environments; in the Academy, for example, there could have been no possibility of delaying till the age of thirty the pupils' first encounter with criticisms of law and accepted moral beliefs, or of providing fifteen years' experience after the age of thirty-five in war and public administration.

We are on ampler but by no means always undisputed ground in approaching the Academy as it was during the last twenty years of Plato's life. A contemporary comic poet has poked fun at the pedantic methods of definition and division employed by the youthful pupils of Plato, who are shown dividing and classifying the world of plants and animals (with logical, not with biological intent), with a refinement that reaches its comic climax in determining the genus of a pumpkin. A rude interruption is ignored, and Plato, unperturbed, mildly bids the youths go forward with the task.²⁸¹ When we examine the dialogues of Plato's later period, we make no doubt of what is being scoffed at here. It is the identical method that we saw exemplified in the *Sophist* and again in the *Politicus*.²⁸² The comedian confirms the inference from these dialogues that Plato was faithfully applying to his students the high standard of rigorous intellectual training without which he believed no one could attain mastery either of private virtue or of the true art of politics.²⁸³ The conformity which is indicated to exist at this one point between Academic practice and the contents of the later dialogues encourages us to go further in the same direction, and to hold that the later dialogues, though there is no reason to believe

²⁷⁹ *Antidosis* 258-268, *Panath.* 26-28.

²⁸⁰ See pp. 30-31 above.

²⁸¹ Epicharmus, Fr. 11 (Kock), *Athenaeus* ii, 59 C.

²⁸² Cf. p. 349.

²⁸³ Harold Cherniss, in his Sather Lectures, *The Riddle of the Early Academy*,

1915, is occupied in disallowing the claims of those who assume that Aristotle, or anyone else, has given adequate evidence of the existence of any other "philosophy of Plato" than that contained in the dialogues. He accepts none of the *Letters* as genuine and repels all suggestions of an oral tradition

they give a rounded picture of Academic teaching, can yet be drawn upon substantially for a knowledge of its spirit and subject matter. On the basis of this probability, let us see what relevant conclusions may fairly be drawn.

Our attention is engaged first by the training the young respondents in several of the later dialogues are shown receiving at the hands of the older man who, in each case, is guiding the discussion. They are being relieved of false preconceptions, and introduced, by example, to the turns and technical refinements of dialectic;²⁸⁴ they are warned of moral dangers and edified by being made parties to demonstrations of noble truth. These young men are depicted as eager and docile learners, a little too close to the educator's dream. But their appreciativeness is fully matched by the engaging courtesy and affectionate consideration with which they are treated by their preceptors, reminding us of the attitude of Socrates in the *Lysis* and *Charmides*, though

supplementing the dialogues. On his way to establish this position, he has touched several points of concern to our present discussion. For Cherniss (pp. 62-63), the evidence of the comic playwright regarding activities of the Academy is negligible: its substance could have been drawn directly from Plato's published works, its form and satiric point are borrowed from his older brother-comedian's *Clouds*, II. 191 ff. The great weight of Cherniss' authority might dismay us here were it not that this point is peripheral to his argument. If I were to risk debate, I should stress the following points: (1) Two other names are linked with that of Plato; the poet undertakes to tell what Plato and Speusippus and Menedemus are doing. This looks in the direction of the Academy, and could not have been derived from the dialogues. (2) The borrowing from Aristophanes is limited to the surface and does not deprive the satiric picture of a distinctive realism of its own. (3) First- or second-hand observation, enlivened by the talk of the town, seems on general principles a more likely basis for a popularly acceptable comedy than such abstract and widely unknown documents as the later Platonic writings.

²⁸⁴ Again, and this time on a major issue, we have taken a position in apparent opposition to that of Cherniss. I say apparent, for it is my belief that most if not all of the contradiction can be removed by careful attention to terminology. Cherniss, *op. cit.*, basing his argument upon the educational provisions of the *Republic* which

forbid dialectic to those below the age of thirty, has denied that Plato would have been more permissive to his younger students in the Academy. Premature requests for explanations of metaphysical points would have been met with recommendation of more time devoted to "abstract thinking and debate," and with the answer, "first, more of the preliminary studies, the exercise of the mind and the cultivation of the character; metaphysics is for the mature!" We may inquire in this connection whether it is necessary to assume quite so precise a transplantation to the environment of actual Athens of the schedule designed for the citizens of the ideal city; we have pointed out above (p. 365) two discrepancies which might have rendered some modification necessary and desirable. Cherniss proceeds to draw the conclusion relevant to his particular interest, namely: that on his premises, it is unthinkable that Plato "came before pupils under thirty years of age . . . and glibly lectured to them on the doctrine of ideas; in fact, . . . [it seems] highly improbable that he lectured on the doctrine or tried to teach it at all" (pp. 69-70). And with this I fully agree. What is required for the security of our position is simply that the ban on "dialectic" which Cherniss supposes to have been operative in the Academy shall not be construed to have excluded young men from engaging, under responsible direction, in dialectical and metaphysical discussions comparable to those exemplified in the *Theaetetus*, the *Sophist*, and the rest.

now containing no hint of gallantry.²⁸⁵ All this on our premises may be seen as an expression of the paternal interest taken by the master of the Academy in the progress of his young wards.

We have mentioned the curriculum of the *Republic* as a most probable indication of the course of studies in the earlier Academy. We find plentiful evidence in the later dialogues of Plato's unflagging interest in the mathematical sciences which figured so prominently in the list. In the *Laws* Plato insists that every citizen must learn enough of geometry to grasp the incommensurability of certain magnitudes, and of astronomy to recognize the periodical regularities of the heavenly bodies, thus to avoid "swinish" ignorance and blasphemy (819 D ff.), while the Law-wardens and their younger associates must pursue a course of study (965 A ff.) substantially at one with that prescribed for the guardians in the *Republic*. Since it cannot be supposed that Plato would be content with any less knowledge for those under his charge, we are required to think that mathematics in all its branches retained to the end the importance Plato had accorded it in the earlier days of the Academy. The *Laws* also confirms what the other late dialogues tell us of the continued importance of dialectic and of its application to the structure of the good for man; we are also reminded of Plato's overweening certainty that dialectics thus applied would infallibly demonstrate the priority of souls and the divine ordering of the universe.

While the younger members of the Academy pursued these basic studies as far as their capacities and their leisure allowed, the maturer men conducted more advanced inquiries of their own. For we must not forget that the Academy contained notables other than Plato, among them that versatile genius Eudoxus, whose contribution to the theory of planetary motion was one of the major achievements of ancient science, not to speak of the young Aristotle, whose researches seem to have been in progress in the last years of Plato's life. That Plato himself engaged in extensive researches, whether alone or in company with others, is made evident by the acquaintance with scientific speculation in many branches of physical and biological science shown in the *Timaeus*, and by the extensive knowledge of history, sociology, and comparative law embodied in the *Laws*. If we are not justified in calling the institution that sheltered and guided these manifold activities by the name of "university" in the full encyclopedic sense of that word, it was, nevertheless, the *alma mater* of all subsequent *alma maters*, and if the descendants have evolved be-

²⁸⁵ See e.g., *Sophist* 231 C-E, 266 D-E, *Politicus* 268 D-E, *Parmenides* 130 A-B. This attitude in the later dialogues is close cousin to that shown in the *Theaetetus*, and also in the *Phaedo*, where as Popper, p. 492, n. 17, has commented, Socrates' manner to

the young men is "pleasant, kind, and respectful." We cannot, however, permit Popper to claim the credit solely for Socrates. What Socrates is shown to do and say in the *Phaedo* has Plato's earnest concurrence.

yond the ancestral form, the Academy loses thereby nothing of its native luster.²⁸⁶

We have here, then, the picture of a community of scholars and scientists engaged in lifelong study, among whom came and went an indeterminate number of younger men, differing in ability, remaining for varying lengths of time, and progressing in their mathematical and dialectical studies to correspondingly different levels of attainment. That Plato intended all of these to acquire absolute power and rule alone, without law, as do the philosopher kings of the *Republic*, only a rash man would maintain. More credible is the supposition that Plato hoped his alumni would emerge enamored of intellectual insight and moral truth, and less inclined to confuse the holding of power with the possession of the good. That he expected the best of them to become capable at last of the disinterested exercise of power one must also believe. In the exceptional case, this might mean personal sovereignty, employed to impose just and constitutional rule; in the millennial instance, even the founding of a city akin to the ideal. More expectably, it would take the form of service in the capacity of legislative expert for new colonies or for the reform of existing constitutions.

In sum, our review of the evidence has, we hope, made clear the robbery

²⁸⁶ Ernst Howald (*Die platonische Akademie und die moderne Universitas Litterarum*, Zurich, 1921) sharply attacked the then prevalent picture of Plato's school as something very like a modern Institute for Advanced Study, where specialists in the various fields of inquiry carried on research under the direction of a Plato before whose "royal superiority of intelligence the greatest mathematicians bowed" (Usener, *apud* Howald, *op. cit.*, p. 4). Howald did good service in removing the exaggeration that pious Platonists had interposed between us and the reality, but he also laid heavy hands upon the reality itself. For Howald, Plato is the eternal type of the unscientific transcendentalist, for whom the "facts" held neither interest nor authority; and he sees the Academy as a religious association of like-minded mystics on the Pythagorean model.

In my judgment, Jaeger (*Aristotle*, 1931, pp. 13-23) has retained what is valid in Howald's overcorrection. Jaeger leaves standing a considerable part of the Academy's scientific reputation, e.g., its contributions to the progress of mathematics and astronomy, and without adulating Plato's supposed scientific genius or leaving

out of sight his basically ethical aim, recognizes the extent to which Plato in the later period of his life turned in the direction of more empirical and scientific inquiry, creating in the Academy an atmosphere in which Aristotle's empiricism was made possible. There is also in Jaeger confirmation of the point of view developed in our text, as suggested by his statement that the later dialogues present a picture of the work of the Academy "that lacks no essential feature" (p. 15). But Jaeger goes further than I should wish to follow him in speaking of the Academy as "a communion of the elect" (p. 23), a phrase which seems to me unfortunate in implying an extreme exclusiveness which nothing in the record supports. Jaeger is quoting from the Seventh Letter a passage which has no necessary application to the Academy (341 C-E). No doubt Plato exercised a considerable discretion in his "admission policy," but the question who were the elect could only have been solved, we must suppose, subsequent to admission. Even in the *Republic*, Plato did not imagine it possible to determine the future guardians without recourse to a series of rigorous tests spread over a period of many years.

by omission committed by those who endow the Academy with a purely political intention, to the neglect of the richness of its aim. And not less clearly we have sought to show the calumny of those who have discovered in it nothing more than a hissing nest of fledgling tyrants.

The Sicilian Venture

Our knowledge of Plato's political experience and activity is fortunately not restricted to his almost wholly passive and theoretical relation to the Athenian scene. We are able to follow him onto the wider and more exciting stage of his Sicilian journeys, where he became in the fullest sense a participant, almost a protagonist. Our sources here are troubled with uncertainty; we must rely, for all practical purposes, exclusively upon those among the collection of thirteen letters traditionally ascribed to Plato which contemporary scholarship generally regards as genuine, or at the very least as composed at an early enough date and by a sufficiently well-informed person to possess historical authority. In the opinion of almost all scholars, these conditions are satisfied by Letters VII and VIII, by all odds the most substantially informative among the collection. Several other letters have won a considerable degree of acceptance.²⁸⁷ But we shall draw only upon the two mentioned, with two exceptions, to be explicitly noted.

²⁸⁷ See R. S. Bluck, *Plato's Life and Thought*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1949, p. 189, for a summary of the opinions of authorities upon the authenticity of the letters taken individually, upon which the assertion in the text is based.

Because of my somewhat anomalous relation to the problems of interpretation rising out of the Platonic *Letters*, documents with which willy-nilly any writer about Plato the man must deal, I offer here a short explanation of my standpoint and the reasons (and causes, so far as I am aware of them) underlying it. As a pupil of the late Dr. Paul Shorey, I came under the influence of a master of Plato's language and thought whose attitude toward the *Letters* was one of uncompromising, but, I believe, discerning objection. As Shorey has made the grounds of his disbelief publicly available (see *What Plato Said*, 1933, p. 40 ff.) I need deal with them but briefly. For Shorey all the letters save the Seventh and Eighth are obviously vitiated by such un-Platonic traits as gross superstition, affectation of a secret, incommunicable doctrine, and sophistical triviality. Letters VII and VIII he could not accept in view of what

seemed to him lesser faults; even these two, however, and *a fortiori* all the rest, seemed to him "incompatible with what we can infer from Plato's undisputed writing was probably his own moral character, and certainly his moral tact" (p. 41). But though unable to believe that these two best letters were from Plato's own hand, Shorey agrees that if not Plato's, they "must have been composed not later than a generation or two after his death by some Platonist who must have had access to the facts and who was himself so steeped in Plato's later writings that he could plausibly imitate their style."

Accepting Shorey's general position, then, I have treated the major letters, i.e., VII and VIII, as probably reliable sources of knowledge in respect to all external facts and plans and intentions which must have been known to Plato's associates in the Academy; I have also indicated the conditional nature of my argument whenever it is based upon the *Letters*. But in deference to the collective wisdom and authority of the majority of latter-day interpreters, who, like Field, Bluck, and Morrow, would accept as genuine the greater number of the *Letters*, and who regard VII and VIII as unquestionably genuine, I have included them in the main body of the text.

yond the ancestral form, the Academy loses thereby nothing of its native luster.²⁸⁶

We have here, then, the picture of a community of scholars and scientists engaged in lifelong study, among whom came and went an indeterminate number of younger men, differing in ability, remaining for varying lengths of time, and progressing in their mathematical and dialectical studies to correspondingly different levels of attainment. That Plato intended all of these to acquire absolute power and rule alone, without law, as do the philosopher kings of the *Republic*, only a rash man would maintain. More credible is the supposition that Plato hoped his alumni would emerge enamored of intellectual insight and moral truth, and less inclined to confuse the holding of power with the possession of the good. That he expected the best of them to become capable at last of the disinterested exercise of power one must also believe. In the exceptional case, this might mean personal sovereignty, employed to impose just and constitutional rule; in the millennial instance, even the founding of a city akin to the ideal. More expectably, it would take the form of service in the capacity of legislative expert for new colonies or for the reform of existing constitutions.

In sum, our review of the evidence has, we hope, made clear the robbery

²⁸⁶ Ernst Howald (*Die platonische Akademie und die moderne Universitas Litterarum*, Zurich, 1921) sharply attacked the then prevalent picture of Plato's school as something very like a modern Institute for Advanced Study, where specialists in the various fields of inquiry carried on research under the direction of a Plato before whose "royal superiority of intelligence the greatest mathematicians bowed" (Usener, *apud* Howald, *op. cit.*, p. 4). Howald did good service in removing the exaggeration that pious Platonists had interposed between us and the reality, but he also laid heavy hands upon the reality itself. For Howald, Plato is the eternal type of the unscientific transcendentalist, for whom the "facts" held neither interest nor authority; and he sees the Academy as a religious association of like-minded mystics on the Pythagorean model.

In my judgment, Jaeger (*Aristotle*, 1934, pp. 13-23) has retained what is valid in Howald's overcorrection. Jaeger leaves standing a considerable part of the Academy's scientific reputation, e.g., its contributions to the progress of mathematics and astronomy, and without adulating Plato's supposed scientific genius or leaving

out of sight his basically ethical aim, recognizes the extent to which Plato in the later period of his life turned in the direction of more empirical and scientific inquiry, creating in the Academy an atmosphere in which Aristotle's empiricism was made possible. There is also in Jaeger confirmation of the point of view developed in our text, as suggested by his statement that the later dialogues present a picture of the work of the Academy "that lacks no essential feature" (p. 15). But Jaeger goes further than I should wish to follow him in speaking of the Academy as "a communion of the elect" (p. 23), a phrase which seems to me unfortunate in implying an extreme exclusiveness which nothing in the record supports. Jaeger is quoting from the Seventh Letter a passage which has no necessary application to the Academy (341 C-E). No doubt Plato exercised a considerable discretion in his "admission policy," but the question who were the elect could only have been solved, we must suppose, subsequent to admission. Even in the *Republic*, Plato did not imagine it possible to determine the future guardians without recourse to a series of rigorous tests spread over a period of many years.

by omission committed by those who endow the Academy with a purely political intention, to the neglect of the richness of its aim. And not less clearly we have sought to show the calumny of those who have discovered in it nothing more than a hissing nest of fledgling tyrants.

The Sicilian Venture

Our knowledge of Plato's political experience and activity is fortunately not restricted to his almost wholly passive and theoretical relation to the Athenian scene. We are able to follow him onto the wider and more exciting stage of his Sicilian journeys, where he became in the fullest sense a participant, almost a protagonist. Our sources here are troubled with uncertainty; we must rely, for all practical purposes, exclusively upon those among the collection of thirteen letters traditionally ascribed to Plato which contemporary scholarship generally regards as genuine, or at the very least as composed at an early enough date and by a sufficiently well-informed person to possess historical authority. In the opinion of almost all scholars, these conditions are satisfied by Letters VII and VIII, by all odds the most substantially informative among the collection. Several other letters have won a considerable degree of acceptance.²⁸⁷ But we shall draw only upon the two mentioned, with two exceptions, to be explicitly noted.

²⁸⁷ See R. S. Bluck, *Plato's Life and Thought*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1949, p. 189, for a summary of the opinions of authorities upon the authenticity of the letters taken individually, upon which the assertion in the text is based.

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We are now about to submit these letters to a brief inspection, in order to extract from them what they are able to tell us of Plato's attempt at a practical application of his political ideals. We are the more obligated to this fuller scrutiny in view of our having drawn from the Seventh Letter in confirmation of Plato's moral disapproval of the Thirty. Impartiality of method demands that we include whatever else creditable or discreditable the record may contain.

The bare facts of Plato's three Sicilian journeys have been incorporated, with a minimum of interpretation, in the *Vita* of Chapter 3,²⁸⁸ and need not be repeated here. But we must give some account of how these facts have appeared to the detractors. Fite, as we have seen,²⁸⁹ treats the whole story as a record of Plato's pedantic ineptitude and childish vanity. He pays no heed to the specific political intentions or results. Popper has abstained from any substantive concern with the letters, having made a compact with himself to rest no part of his argument upon writings not assuredly genuine,²⁹⁰ and having, moreover, preferred to interpret Plato as preoccupied with conspiring to establish himself as the philosopher king of Athens. Nevertheless, he has found in Plato's relations to Sicilian affairs, especially through the participation of his pupils from the Academy in Dion's armed overthrow of the tyranny at Syracuse, what he thinks good reasons for reasserting Plato's advocacy of an indefensible use of power.²⁹¹

Crossman, regarding letters VII and VIII, at least, as unquestionably

tionably Plato's own, I have given more space to arguments based upon the personal and subjective details of Letters VII and VIII than my private conviction would warrant.

²⁸⁸ See pp. 42-44 above.

²⁸⁹ See pp. 55-56, and 67 above.

²⁹⁰ Popper, p. 475, note 5 to chapter 3. Popper does on one occasion utilize the letters (p. 606, note 57 to chapter 10) in conditional corroboration of his own theory that Plato in the dialogues consciously misrepresents the views of Socrates.

²⁹¹ Popper, pp. 134, 550, and 610. Popper, following Athenaeus (XI, 508), lists with relish several members or supposed members of the Academy who were subsequently involved in usurpations or assassinations. Athenaeus, to whom Zeller (*Plato and the Earlier Academy*, 1888, p. 30, n.) refers as an "adversary" of Plato, is a biased and almost irresponsible source where Plato is concerned, directing against him an often grossly inaccurate and scurrilous diatribe (XI, 504 C-509 E), of which the passage in question forms part. We need not doubt that

some of Plato's pupils turned out to be unprincipled men. But we may still object that Popper has given undue weight to these unhappy instances by his failure to list also the pupils or associates who are said to have had honorable success as legislative experts (Plutarch, *Adv. Colotem.* 1126 C, *apud* Taylor, *Plato*, 1929, p. 464). Further, Popper has not observed that in the Greek world of that day, many a young man of wealth and influence became an unprincipled and ambitious seeker after power, without benefit of any philosophic teaching; it was this general breakdown of the old social bonds and moral influences that set for both Socrates and Plato the problem of finding new grounds for the threatened values. Popper has urged in defense of Socrates, the teacher of Critias and Alcibiades, a plea which we may borrow for use in Plato's behalf: "He went out of his way to attract young men and to gain influence over them, especially when he . . . thought that some day they might possibly hold offices of responsibility" (Popper, p. 186).

genuine, has treated Plato's Sicilian experiences with seriousness and respect, but finds in them grounds for the gravest indictment of Plato's political philosophy as impracticable, and destined to achieve only illiberal results. Crossman's Plato, on setting out for Syracuse at Dion's and Dionysius' invitation in 367 B.C., carried in his satchel the *Republic*, which was his political program, "composed with the possibility of an invitation from Syracuse constantly in view."²⁹² Plato did not, however, anticipate its immediate realization in Syracuse. The steps which were to precede and to condition the embodiment of the ideal state were three: (1) the education of Dionysius as a philosopher was to be begun; (2) the governing clique at the Syracusan court were to be morally reformed and induced to abnegate their wealth; (3) the Greek cities of Sicily were to be restored,²⁹³ supplied with aristocratic constitutions, and set under the young king's rule. Once Dionysius should be successfully educated into a philosopher, Plato believed, "everything else would follow of its own accord," that is, the *Republic* would become a political fact.²⁹⁴

Crossman reports without malice the collapse of these hopes, representing Plato's motives as honorable and his plans, while doomed to failure, as not absurdly visionary. But after the unsuccessful third trip, in 361 B.C., Crossman believes, Plato's faith in the program of the *Republic* "collapsed like a house of cards." Despairing of the possibility of ideal rulers, he turned to the planning of constitutional governments in which "the freedom and liberty of the subject" are preserved, as giving "at least some protection against tyranny."²⁹⁵

We are now told of Dion's attempt, after his successful *coup d'état* and expulsion of Dionysius from Syracuse, to introduce there "a modern system of cabinet responsibility to a popular assembly,"²⁹⁶ and of the failure of this type of constitutional government to win the support of any of the major pressure groups in Syracusan politics. The resulting bloodshed and civil turmoil marks, for Crossman, "the end of the attempt to put Plato's philosophy into practice."²⁹⁷ Dion met death at the hand of an assassin. To Plato was left only guilt, frustration, a turn to pacifism, and death.

Crossman presently gives us in retrospect what he regards as the three major assumptions underlying the *Republic* as a political program: (1) the ordinary man is incapable of self-government; (2) there do exist individuals capable of absolute rule; (3) these individuals will most often be found in the ranks of the gentry. From these three taken together, Crossman believes, Plato drew a conclusion which "transforms the *Republic* . . . to an aristoc-

²⁹² Crossman, p. 107.

²⁹³ The Greek population of these cities had been compulsorily removed to Syracuse by Dionysius I, in pursuance of his policy of centralization.

²⁹⁴ Crossman, pp. 267-268.

²⁹⁵ Crossman, p. 272.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

racy of birth" in which the claims of the abler members of the inferior class are quietly dropped from view. In consequence, Plato's message, despite its author's intentions,²⁹⁸ becomes simply "the practical proposition, 'the best of the existing aristocracy should become dictators.'"²⁹⁹

Having heard Crossman's view, we may now proceed to our own interpretation, to be followed by a final balancing of accounts. We must first ask what meaning is to be attached to the mere fact that Plato permitted himself to participate as he did in the political affairs of Syracuse. Apart from the particular policies that he attempted to carry out, what significance is there in the type of association which Plato consented to enter with the two Dionysii, and with Dion? Even before he first visited Syracuse, in 389-388 B.C., as a man of about 40, he must have known by report how affairs were managed under the ruthless Dionysius I, and the Seventh Letter (326 B-D) records his first strongly unfavorable impressions of life at the Syracusan court. The blistering word picture of the tyrant in the *Republic* (565 C ff.), however much or little it may have borrowed from the physiognomy of the man whom Plato met,³⁰⁰ would in any case make it difficult to understand how its painter could enter into a lifelong idealistic friendship with a man, Dion, who was doubly related by marriage to the despot, and was later to serve him for many years as his admiral and trusted minister. We must explain, too, how Plato could consent to involve himself, at Dion's instance, in the affairs of that tyrant's son, Dionysius II.

As to Dion, he must have seemed, when Plato came to know him on his first voyage to Sicily, to have been a soul well worth the saving, young, able, passionately responsive to the philosophic stimulus that Plato gave³⁰¹ — in short, a sort of stabler Alcibiades with a conscience. But what shall we make of the ensuing friendship running through the years, between Plato the tyrannophobe and Dion, the servant of a tyrant's will? There is, obviously, something here to be explained. But without doing violence to any of the attested facts, Plato's defender can urge the following: the evidence shows only that Dion continued to perform the duties that devolved upon him as an officer of the existing government, which Plato had taught him to disapprove. In the making of this government, perhaps the most powerful in the world of that

²⁹⁸ For Crossman's testimony to Plato's good intentions, see his p. 284.

²⁹⁹ Crossman, p. 281. Crossman's belief that Plato's actual plan in Syracuse was simply to moralize the existing upper classes and confirm their tenure of power, has apparently influenced his interpretation of the *Republic* so far as to cause him to discount Plato's plain statement in the *Republic* that in the ideal state the most highly endowed children of whatever social origin are to be

educated as guardians. It is our conviction, defended on p. 540, that Plato meant precisely what he said.

³⁰⁰ Some elements in the portrait of the tyrant in the *Republic* are closely paralleled by characteristics of Dionysius I; others, notably sensual indulgence, do not seem to have been drawn from this source. Cf. Willamowitz, 1913, pp. 343-344.

³⁰¹ Letter VII, 327 A-B.

day, Dion had had no hand; it was fully established by the time Dion reached maturity, and had incidentally been honorably recognized by a decree of the Athenians in 394-393, during Dion's boyhood.³⁰² If we may believe Plutarch's moralizing tale, Dion was also the only person at the court with the hardihood of speaking out his disapproval in the face of the tyrant himself.³⁰³ Chief point of all, as soon as the realities admitted of taking definite action, upon the death of Dionysius I, he unhesitatingly moved in the direction of his political ideals and sent for the admired Plato to help him train Dionysius II for the role of constitutional monarch and pattern of all human excellence (we shall justify our assertion here on a later page). It would seem unreasonable to ask more than this from Dion, unless one takes the view that in the interests of pure Platonic ideality, he should have abandoned all hope of contributing to future reform and have gone forth, an impoverished exile, to accept perhaps board and room at the Academy, or more realistically, to find precarious employment as a soldier of fortune.³⁰⁴

But if Plato's friendship with Dion has thus seemed to require explanation, Plato's own intervention in Syracuse needs no defense. It was consistent with all that was best in Plato that he should have been prepared to face the realities of power in the hope of turning it in a beneficent direction. And in coming to the court of Dionysius II in 367 and again in 361 B.C., Plato was propelled, as the letters show us, by highly creditable motives. He was responding to the call of Dion, to whom as friend he felt an obligation. Even more compelling was his basic commitment to the principles of his philosophic creed, which obligated him to help in the peaceful and persuasive creation, wherever possible, of communities enjoying a happiness based upon virtue.³⁰⁵ These principles he had proclaimed, and where they bade he would

³⁰² C. A. H., VI, 132-133.

³⁰³ Plutarch, *Life of Dion*, v, 4-5.

³⁰⁴ The particular criticism of Plato which this paragraph has attempted to answer is found in a recent semifictional "doubtful biography," *Plato and Dionysius*, by Ludwig Marcuse, 1947. The little book is rather more inclusive than its title suggests, covering the relations, as its author sees them, between Athens, Socrates, Plato, the two Dionysii, and Dion, with an epilogue two Dionysii, and Dion, with an epilogue on Plato's message for the world today. It is a witty and readable performance in spite of what to my taste is its unfortunate attempt to tell a solemn tale with journalistic flippancy. Mr. Marcuse has made free use of his apparently extensive learning; one did not expect and does not get documentation for his sometimes breathtaking interpretations, for example his notion that the *Republic* is a love letter addressed to Dionysius I, wooing him to become the perfect ruler. Though on occasion Marcuse figures as a Platonic detractor, and throughout exempts none of the persons dealt with from his condescending ridicule, on balance the book is a substantial approval of Plato as a man who set the example of refusal to accept tamely the unacceptable *status quo*, and instead championed the Deed, even the dangerous and perhaps mistaken Deed, which, Marcuse affirms, is the only hope even today of escaping intolerable evils.

³⁰⁵ Here we may recall Toynbee's rebuke (vol. VI, pp. 255-259) to Plato for thinking he could remain a philosopher with a sword concealed in his mantle. I do not think Toynbee's criticism is separable from his fundamental tenet that the Lord has supplied the only fit guide for humanity in the person of a Christ crucified; in rejecting Plato as savior, Toynbee has done him the

follow, despite the uncertainties of the enterprise (VII, 328 B-C, 329 B) and even the very real risk which was involved: it should not be forgotten that those who incurred a tyrant's displeasure might count themselves fortunate to escape with their lives (VII, 350 C). Plato felt, for all these reasons, that his self-respect was deeply involved. Some have seen in the last-mentioned motives no more than the vanity of a self-regarding wish to show the world that he was no obscure schoolmaster "whispering in a corner to three or four strip-lings" (*Gorgias* 485 D), but a professional counselor of kings. To say this is to confuse self-respect with self-regard, and to ignore the nature of the self in question.

We approach now consideration of the actual program that Plato and Dion attempted to set up in place of the existing tyranny. And here we confront our basic disagreement with Crossman. We cannot follow him in his belief that it was Plato's hope and expectation, after a period of preparation lasting perhaps (Crossman does not specify) no more than a decade or so, to see rising from the reform of the tyranny the whole shining fabric of the Republic,³⁰⁸ complete with the communism of the ruling class and the dictatorship of a philosopher in the person of the converted Dionysius II.

We cannot accept the notion that the *Republic* bears clear traces of having been written with any such application in view. Syracuse, like Athens, and in even higher degree, was extremely ill-fitted for conversion into the compact, ordered, and austere city of the *Republic*. And as to Dionysius II, nothing in the record could have suggested to Plato that he possessed that extraordinary endowment of intellect and moral genius by which the philosopher kings had been defined, and on the basis of which they were to have been selected from among the most promising members of their generation. It must be remembered, too, that those exalted beings were to have been trained and protected from all untoward influences from earliest childhood; the environment of the court had supplied Dionysius, who was already some thirty years old at his accession, with an education opposed to this at all points. Judging from the *Republic* alone, then, it appears probable that Plato's initial program for Syracuse, so far as he permitted himself to have one in advance, would have

honor of placing him in a position immediately below that accorded to the Savior of mankind. The older Plato believed strongly in Providence, but not to the exclusion of the use of swords for the maintenance of order against enemies without and within. Plato's standpoint is nearer to that of Pascal (*Pensées*, Première Partie, Art. IX): "La justice sans la force est impuissante; la puissance sans la justice est tyrannique . . . Il faut donc mettre ensemble la justice et la force; et pour cela faire que ce qui

est juste soit fort, et que ce qui est fort soit juste."

³⁰⁸ Our view here agrees with that of R. S. Bluck, the most recent English editor of *Plato's Seventh and Eighth Letters*, Cambridge, 1947, p. 6. Bluck, in turn agrees with G. R. Morrow, *Studies in the Platonic Epistles*, 1935, p. 160 ff. To Morrow's lucid and otherwise admirable inquiry our whole discussion of Plato's Sicilian journeys owes a substantial debt.

been far less ambitious than the creation of the ideal city, with Dionysius as philosopher king

An inspection of the letters themselves will reveal, however, the difficulty of arriving at certainty regarding Plato's political objectives in Syracuse, and will show how it is possible for highly responsible observers to reach opposing interpretations, how Crossman can hold his view, while Morrow can argue forcefully that the aim was never other than the establishment of a constitutional monarchy.³⁰⁷ We shall seek to marshal first the reasons for this latter view, as derived from the Seventh Letter

Letter VII is an open letter, or pamphlet, purporting to be written by Plato, shortly after the death of Dion, to Dion's friends and supporters in Syracuse, in response to their request for advice concerning the settlement of Sicilian political affairs. It combines a few paragraphs of this advice with a brief account of the development of Plato's own political principles, leading into a more detailed record of his entire relationship to Sicily, particularly to Dionysius II and to Dion.

As to the making of Dionysius into a fit person to serve as enlightened ruler of Sicily, the letter contains no evidence that Plato had been led to expect in Dionysius any very unusual gifts of mind or spirit,³⁰⁸ none had been asserted of him by Dion in his initial appeal to Plato (327 E-328 A). The young tyrant had come to feel, Dion had reported, a longing for philosophy and education, and Dion had thought it possible that he might become sufficiently inspired with a desire for the virtuous life, to cooperate in establishing good government, in accord with Plato's political principles, in Syracuse. Thus the tyranny would be abolished "without massacres and murders" and the other evils of civil strife (327 D). Accordingly, we are not surprised to hear of Plato's and Dion's efforts, undertaken on Plato's arrival, to convert Dionysius from his dissolute way of life, employing every resource of the teacher and moralist and holding out to him an alluring picture of the fruits of reform: troops of friends upon whom he could depend as loyal supporters of his rule, and by whose aid he could hope to extend his power against the Carthaginians (331 E). The attempted conversion failed, but Plato expresses his conviction that if it had succeeded, or if Dion's later attempt himself to establish a government of laws in Syracuse had been successful, the highest interests of philosophy and of mankind throughout the world would have been served,

for if philosophy and power had really been united in the same person the radiance thereof would have shone through the whole world of Greeks and Barbarians and fully imbued them with the true conviction that no state or any individual man can ever become happy unless he passes his life in subjection to justice combined with wisdom whether it

³⁰⁷ Morrow *op cit* p 150 ff

³⁰⁸ This is not meant to imply that Plato at least after personal contact with Dio

nyus thought him stupid at 339 D he calls him "naturally well-endowed for learning"

be that he possesses these virtues within himself or as the result of being reared and trained righteously under god-fearing rulers in their ways (335 D).³⁰⁹

Noticeable in all this is that though the ruler is to possess philosophy, the primary stress is laid upon moral goodness and the transforming effect of the sovereign's virtue (and of the good laws, which, as we are told in the case of Dion, he would have established) upon public morals, with the resulting benefit to all.

In mentioning law as a feature of the Syracusan government-to-be, we have touched upon a recurring theme in the Seventh Letter. On the opening page we read the declaration that Dion's opinion from the very first (and Plato's own, for he had derived it from Plato) had been that "the Syracusans ought to be free and dwell under the best laws" (324 B). Again in his advice to the friends of Dion, Plato announces as his third repetition of the doctrine, the advice he had urged first upon Dion and then upon Dionysius: "Neither Sicily, nor yet any other State . . . should be enslaved to human despots but rather to laws" (334 C). Dion, who had accepted this teaching, would have brought "freedom" to Syracuse, and would then have endeavored "to set the citizens in order by suitable laws of the best kind" (336 A). Dion, we hear again near the end of the letter, aimed only to establish "a moderate government" (*politeia*) "and the . . . justest and best of laws" (351 C). To be noted in passing is the vehement rejection of any intention to redistribute property, either by violent seizure or by popular decree (351 B).

This repeated assertion of the primacy of law, coupled with the idea of an exemplary ruler,³¹⁰ implies, it would seem, the establishment of what we should call constitutional monarchy. We shall see, when we come to examine the Eighth Letter, that Plato approved highly the voluntary relinquishment by a king of a large part of his power for the good of the state. And we need not doubt that Plato had originally expected to superintend this relinquishment and relying on his own experience and insight as moral and educational expert,³¹¹ with the help of Dion as the expert in Sicilian affairs, himself to take the major part in the drawing up of the new constitution. In the light of these considerations, it is not unlikely that Plato intended the function of the ruler, once he had employed his power to instate the government of laws, to be chiefly that of setting the moral tone and standard of the state, and ex-

³⁰⁹ We have followed Morrow in rendering *hosios* "god-fearing" where Bury renders it "holy"; otherwise the translation is Bury's, Loeb Library.

³¹⁰ In the *Politicus*, 302 B-E, Plato was to express the opinion that in the absence of the ideal statesman, the least imperfect form of rule is that of one man under the restraint of a written code of law. Since

the dissolute young monarch could not, as we have argued, have been readily mistaken by Plato for a potential instance of the ideal ruler, the *Politicus* adds confirmation to the view defended in our text.

³¹¹ For the moral and educational functions of the lawgiver, cf. *Politicus* 309 D, and *Laws* (e.g.) 770 B-771 A, 688 A-B, 743 C-744 A, 718 C ff.

peeted him to relegate the actual conduct of affairs, with certain specified exceptions, to the magistrates, himself remaining thenceforth, like all others in the realm, subject to the laws.

The resettling of the Sicilian cities is viewed from the standpoint of Plato's usual concern for the preservation of the values of Hellenic culture against barbarian encroachment (336 A). These cities were to be resettled, equipped with codes of "equal laws" (*isonomia*) (336 D), and linked to one another and Syracuse in bonds of friendship by "laws and constitutions" (332 E).

From the Third Letter, if we may trust it, we hear (316 A) that Plato labored, during the early months of his first stay at the court of Dionysius II, in constructing "preludes" to laws, those moralizing and persuasive little prefaces which were Plato's own invention and of which we hear so much in the *Laws*. This occupation, if shared with Dionysius, or if the preludes were presented to him for examination and approval as they were composed, would seem to have been well suited to the elementary instruction of the royal pupil in the principles of morals and legislation, and implies that the promulgation of laws was at the heart of Plato's plan for Syracuse from the beginning.

We have assembled from the Seventh Letter the principal evidence which suggests that Plato's original plan for the reform of Syracuse was the more moderate one of constitutional monarchy. But we are not at liberty to brush aside Crossman's assumption to the contrary, which must be allowed to possess a considerable initial plausibility.³¹²

(1) In support of the view that the ideal Republic was to be attempted, the Seventh Letter provides, as its second repeated theme, the coupling of the notions of philosophy and political power. We have already quoted one such passage. There is also the impressive reassertion, included in Plato's brief account of his own intellectual history, of the familiar central sentence of the *Republic* stating the necessity that philosophers shall become rulers, and conversely (326 A-B). Dion, too, in urging Plato in the first instance to come to Syracuse and attempt to win over Dionysius II, had argued that this was the long-awaited opportunity to combine in the same persons philosophy and the rule over great cities (328 A). These expressions undoubtedly suggest, at first blush, that the realization of the ideal city was definitely intended. Dion's prediction of the unbounded happiness throughout Sicily (327 C, D), which was to result from the new philosophical regime, points in the same

³¹² This appears to have been a prevalent view and well worth relating when A. E. Taylor wrote (*Plato*, 1929, p. 7). Post (*Thirteen Epistles of Plato*, 1925), while leaving the question of Plato's precise expectation in going to Syracuse undetermined in his introduction, encourages Crossman's view by speaking (p. 68) of Plato's

"attempt to convert Dionysius and so to set up the ideal commonwealth." The Loeb Library translator of the *Letters*, R. G. Bury, also appears to lend countenance to this view, in speaking (p. 470) of Plato's hope of "realizing the philosopher's dream of the ideal state."

direction, and recalls that "cessation of evils" promised on the same terms in the *Republic*.

(2) At a later point in the letter, Plato has occasion to disparage attempts to expound in writing ultimate metaphysical principles, as Dionysius has purported to do, in a book which he has published; and in this connection Plato mentions the prerequisites to grasping these principles: love of wisdom, disposition to sober living, long application in association with a master, or, later on, independently (340 C-D).³¹³ Presently Plato adds the all-essential precondition to any degree of success in the enterprise: the candidate must have natural goodness of soul, kinship to the objective goodness of which he is in search, as well as the necessary intellectual powers; without these, "Lynceus himself could not make him see" (344 A). It would be open to Crossman to argue that the educative ideals here under discussion are essentially those of the ideal rulers of the *Republic*, and that Plato's association of them with his own attempts to promote the education of Dionysius proves that Plato had all along, up to the moment of ultimate failure, been grooming Dionysius for the office of philosopher king in the full sense. Also lending support to this view is the passage in the third letter (319 C) which records that Plato had prescribed for Dionysius the study of geometry as a preliminary to the carrying out of legal reforms.

(3) One other sentence in the letter lends support to Crossman's view. Plato, it will be remembered, is offering advice to the friends of Dion as to the settlement of Sicilian affairs, now that Dion has passed from the scene. He has recommended the summoning of a legislative commission to draw up laws for Syracuse and the lesser cities of the island. But in the sentence in question (337 D) he declares that such an arrangement is only the "second" best, in contrast to what he had hoped to accomplish in association with Dionysius, the "first" or truly best plan, "good things common to all."³¹⁴ This

³¹³ Something should here be said of the so-called "tyrant's test," which, on the evidence of the Seventh Letter (340 B-341 A), Plato administered to Dionysius II on his second arrival at the monarch's court. Reports had reached Plato in Athens that during his absence Dionysius had been seized with a renewed passion for philosophy and had been making great progress in his studies. Plato, wishing to verify these rumors, thought fit to apply the test in question, a species of combined aptitude and interest test, designed to reveal whether or not the candidate's reported interest in philosophy was more than a superficial vanity. It consisted in part in "pointing out what the subject" (i.e., philosophy) "is as a whole, and what its character, and how

many preliminary subjects it entails and how much labor" (Bury's trans., Loeb Library). One might argue that the delay in administering this test until the second visit shows that a thorough-going grounding of Dionysius in philosophical disciplines had been no part of Plato's original project. There is, I think, weight in this argument, but, on the other side, it is conceivable that pedagogical caution inspired the delay. We shall therefore not build any part of our case upon this argument.

³¹⁴ Plato's word *agatha*, which we have translated as "good things," is a broadly inclusive term capable of embracing all genuine values, whether moral or material; so we find him employing it at *Laws* 697 B. — This intricately ambiguous sentence,

latter phrase, standing in loose connection with the rest of the sentence, is commonly interpreted as a brief description or identification of the first plan. The sentence, then, can be understood to mean that the "first," or truly best, is identical with the basic pattern of the *Republic*, and can be read as Plato's explicit statement that his original intent at Syracuse was the establishment of the ideal city. The chief support of this interpretation is found in the *Laws* (739 A-E), where, referring to the constitution of the *Republic*, or to one that differs from it only by going further in the same direction of communism, Plato puts it "first," in contrast to the type of city aimed at in the *Laws*, which is "second in point of excellence."

We must now weigh one against the other the two interpretations of Plato's plan for Syracuse, beginning with the part assigned to Dionysius. In the face of the evidence, it cannot be denied that Plato originally hoped, on the strength of Dion's recommendation, to turn Dionysius into a philosopher or lover of wisdom, in some sense of that adjustable word. Absolute power, or so Plato believed,³¹⁵ lay already in his hand; and thus he would fulfill the requirement of the combination of power with philosophy. But here we must not be led into accepting a choice between the rival errors of "all" or "none," with no permission to accept a modest intermediate "some," in respect to the degree of philosophic wisdom required. It is no doubt true that Plato would have been delighted to carry Dionysius as "high as metaphysic wit could fly," had that young man exhibited the requisite strength of wing; later on, on his second visit to the young monarch, Plato did make trial of his fitness for the higher flights, and found him wanting. No doubt, also, Plato was well aware of the long and arduous discipline the candidate would have to endure in order, first, to overcome his moral miseducation, and then to acquire the minimum intellectual grounding for exemplary virtue, and for this purpose he may well have considered geometry a useful study. Yet it is very unlikely that Plato felt it a necessary condition for the substantial success of his venture that Dionysius should complete a program of studies in all branches of mathematics and in dialectics, culminating in the immediate vision of the Good, such as that sketched in the *Republic* for the higher education of the guardians.

Our contention may be enforced by reference to the case of Dion. Plato's confidence in him was apparently unlimited, and his death, Plato pronounces in the Seventh Letter, was as great a blow to the cause of philosophic rule as the refusal of Dionysius II to enter upon the life of philosophy. Dion, though

mentioning three apparently distinct alternative plans for Syracuse, which, however, are classified under only two degrees of excellence, is discussed by Morrow, p. 150ff., with much clarity; it is his interpretation which we essentially follow.

³¹⁵ Crossman (p. 285) has pointed out

that even a tyrant has power only in so far as his rule serves the interests and receives the support of important groups within the state, and that probably the carrying out of such reforms as Plato contemplated was beyond the power of any tyrant.

not himself in the strategic position of ruler, had been able to spread the right appraisal of values among some of the young men of the Syracusan court, with Plato's full approval (327 B-D); we even hear of his having imparted some knowledge of philosophical doctrines (338 D). Yet Dion, to all appearances, had enjoyed only a very limited opportunity to pursue philosophy into its more advanced and technical reaches. True, there is every reason to suppose that he had eagerly read and pondered Plato's dialogues as they successively appeared, and had in the process developed fuller insight into the principles of the Platonic philosophy. But his claims to be a "philosopher" appear to have reposed for Plato, who so styles him (336 B) in the Seventh Letter, primarily upon his noble enthusiasm for virtue and his steadfast subordination of all opposing claims to those of justice. No more than this, possibly less, is what Plato would have felt it necessary to achieve in the education of Dionysius. And this would be much; for should this be realized, then Plato could hope that power joined to the wisdom of virtue, accompanied by the promulgation of good laws, and resulting in the morality and happiness of a nation, would stand as a beacon for the illumination of "the whole world of Greeks and barbarians" (VII, 335 D, 336 B). (Herein is contained explicit indication of awareness and concern on Plato's part, if the Seventh Letter is genuine, for that wider community of mankind for which, we remember, Popper was unable to detect in him anything but hostility.

We have not yet met the argument derived from the parallelism between the prerequisites to philosophical insight as described in Letter VII and that combination of qualities and pursuits exacted of the candidates for the highest office in the *Republic*. What in my view goes far to turn the force of this argument is the context of the passage in the letter, which is nonpolitical. Plato is talking epistemology and metaphysics. The question is how a knowledge of first principles can be reached, such as would be requisite for describing them in a treatise like that which Dionysius was reported to have written (an attempt that Plato deprecates in any case). Plato is describing something far above that minimum "love of wisdom" which he would have felt necessary for any sort of philosophic ruler, even assuming him to be assisted by skilled and philosophically trained advisers, as Dionysius would have been by Dion and Plato. Nor is he describing the basic level of conceptual competence which the beginning study of geometry was intended to promote — if the third letter and Plutarch are correct in reporting that this formed part of Plato's curriculum for Dionysius.

What we are here arguing, in short, is the perhaps somewhat uncouth view that Plato, in speaking of his great hope that a true love of philosophy should arise among the mighty, was willing if necessary to accept in such exalted persons an equipment less than maximum, if only the king in question was amenable to instruction and was, himself, virtuous, and to adjust, accordingly, the type of political organization which should be adopted. A sort

of symbiosis of the ruler and his philosophic advisers was tacitly assumed, for at least the period during which the new constitution was being shaped and imposed; and the future course of affairs was left vague, possibly on the assumption that the ruler, having submitted himself to the laws, would withdraw so far as his duties permitted into those more delightful occupations of the spirit of which in the *Republic* Plato speaks with such conviction, thus coming in time, perhaps, to possess in his own right philosophic insight. Plato has not confided to us his plans or expectations in this respect. But he may consistently with his principles have believed that such a king would by his blameless and disinterested conduct so win the esteem of the citizens that, as occasion arose, he would be consulted in national crises, and so would continue to exert a beneficent influence despite his abandonment of absolute power.

There remains in support of the view that we are maintaining what is, I think, our least disputable piece of evidence. We are offered in the *Laws* (711 E ff.) a brief sketch of the coöperative relationship between a young tyrant, who is "temperate, quick at learning, with a good memory, brave, and of a noble manner," who is also "fortunate . . . only in this, that in his time there should arise a praiseworthy lawgiver, and that, by a piece of good fortune, the two of them should meet"; from such a conjunction there arises, more quickly and easily than in any other way, the best state. And this is effected primarily by the example and influence of the monarch, who distributes honor and dishonor, reward and degradation, in accord with the true and valid standards of "reason's dictates, called by the name of 'law'" (713 E). It is possible to see in this Plato's retrospective comment on his Sicilian experience, his reassertion that what he had hoped to accomplish was still highly desirable and, in a favorable case, possible. We are also, on this assumption, given a clue to exactly what it was which to Plato's mind was responsible for the failure with Dionysius: the tyrant must possess temperance, not of the philosophic kind which is identical with wisdom, but that "ordinary kind . . . which by natural instinct springs up at birth in children and animals, so that some are . . . continent, in respect to pleasures" (710 A). It seems to be plain from this passage that Plato did not expect the young tyrant to supply from within himself the necessary wisdom, at least in the early stages; though it is provokingly obvious, also, that Plato does not draw so precise a line as could be wished between the respective functions of the partners in the association.

But if Dionysius was expected to acquire only a limited philosophical insight, there is no longer any reason to suppose that Plato would have sanctioned a code of laws which left such a ruler in possession of absolute power. That is to say, once the supposition is abandoned that Dionysius was to become in his own person the completely trained lawgiver, we may revert to our earlier stated view, and take in its obvious sense Plato's statement that

Syracuse must be enslaved not to men but to laws. The aim of Plato was to abolish the tyranny as such, and from his repeated coupling of the contemplated government that was to replace it with the "rule of law," we feel justified in rejecting any identification of Plato's plan for Syracuse with a program in which law was overshadowed by the benevolent omniscience of its idealized rulers, and in concluding, as we have said above, that constitutional monarchy, with the right of hereditary succession, was the intended form of rule.

This view is reinforced by a consideration which Crossman has not confronted: if the *Republic* was to have been realized at Syracuse, an absolute prerequisite would have been the voluntary renunciation by Dionysius of all right to transmit his power to his descendants, and the handing over of authority to choose future rulers of Syracuse to a self-perpetuating group of philosopher-guardians, which, if we follow Crossman, would have been set up under Plato's direction by selection of candidates from among the sons of the nobility or members of the court circle of Syracuse. The abdication of Dionysius himself would also have been entailed, had the scheme been carried out consistently, as soon as among the crop of new philosophers one or more should be found who were his superiors. To have proposed to a reigning tyrant any such idea would certainly have been wildly unrealistic; and there is, in fact, no hint that either Dion or Plato ever included it in his most distant plans.

If, then, we assert that Dionysius was not expected to become, in the full sense, a philosopher king, and that the new government of Syracuse was to be a constitutional, hereditary monarchy, it may be felt that we have still not sufficiently accounted for Plato's and Dion's predictions of "unbounded felicity" for Sicily; it may be argued that the author of the *Republic* could have anticipated so happy a result only if the reformed government of Syracuse were to correspond closely with the particular institutional arrangements of his ideal state. Crossman, as we have seen, relying apparently on the sentence in Letter VII describing Plato's original plan as "first" in excellence, and particularly on the phrase "good things common to all," takes it for granted that Plato expected this pattern to be established in some detail, and that at no distant date. Yet this supposition is not as solidly grounded as at first appears. The phrase "good things common to all" has been plausibly rejected by Morrow as an intrusion into Plato's text of a marginal gloss by some early commentator.³¹⁶ If this view be accepted, we are no longer re-

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cal status in the sentence. On Morrow's view the ancient commentator was adducing (wrongly) the very parallel by means of which a modern interpreter may seek to justify the presence in the text of the disputed phrase, and was suggesting that this

quired to believe that the "first" or best plan included the distinctive social institutions of the *Republic*. Had it done so, surely we might have looked for extensive indications, both earlier and later in the Sicilian letters, that Plato intended making so remarkable an alteration in the social landscape; but apart from the disputed sentence, they maintain an unbroken silence.

The notion that Plato's reforming imagination was inseparably attached to the particularities of the *Republic* is further weakened by a second consideration. The concluding section of the *Politicus*, a dialogue written some time after Plato's first visit to Dionysius II, sketches institutions markedly divergent from the scheme of the *Republic*. The account is short and by no means explicit, but it is clear that there is no separation of the citizens into three classes, nor is there any mention of communism of property or of wives. And yet, as truly as we so term the *Republic*, it is an ideal state, designed and supervised by the Statesman in person. Again, how very different are the institutions of the *Laws*, a state to Plato's mind only once removed from ideality. The conclusion of the matter would seem to be that Plato reserved the right to employ in his political planning as much or as little of the pattern of the *Republic* as the fitness of the occasion might suggest, keeping always to the principle that the laws and institutions of a state, in proportion to its excellence, must be so devised as to place power at the service of wisdom, embodied either in ideal rulers or in good laws, and to issue in the maximum attainment by its citizens of the whole of virtue, and of the highest degree of mutuality and harmony.³¹⁷ The constitution of Syracuse might therefore, under its Platonic reformation, approximate the pattern of any state which should embody this principle. And in anticipating such a consummation, Plato and Dion might well have felt cause for rejoicing.

Great inequality of wealth between citizens — witness the *Republic* and the *Laws* — Plato always regarded as a major source of disunion, and this he would certainly have wished to eliminate, but he would not necessarily have approached the goal in the manner that Crossman supposes, by demanding the abnegation of wealth by the Syracusan court, preparatory to converting them into a communistic sodality of civil servants. Plato might more probably have expected to work toward the reduction of economic inequality first by vigorous efforts to lower the place of wealth in the general esteem by the example of an austere king, and by the educational effect of the re-

sentence be understood in the light of *Laws* 739 A-E, where, as we have seen, community of wives and property is treated as belonging to the essential nature of the best state. Morrow takes no note of an alternative way of rendering innocuous the offending phrase, followed by Howald, Bury, and Post. This is to interpret the three Greek words as conveying the notion of "blessings"

or "benefits enjoyed by all," an interpretation that does no violence to the Greek and removes the strong implication that Platonic communism is intended.

³¹⁷ This principle, which we find pervading the argument of the *Republic*, may be found stated in the *Laws*, e.g., at 630 E, 688 A-B, 770 D and 739 C-E.

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from the *Timaeus* and the *Laws*, we can write him down as a champion of autonomy among Greek states, and of leagues for mutual coöperation, as against hegemony of one powerful state over smaller neighbors.³²⁰

We have thus presented, principally on the basis of the Seventh Letter, what appears sufficient evidence to dispel the notion that Plato's project in Sicily constituted a "hare-brained venture," as Fite would have it, into the naive blue, or, to speak with Crossman, a plan for establishing a dictatorship of "the best of the existing aristocracy." Further confirmation of this result awaits us in a source of which as yet we have made little use, the important Eighth Letter, which in the process of describing Plato's later political proposals for Syracuse, will cast a backward light upon his original hopes and intentions. But before passing to the consideration of these later plans, we must stop to consider a matter of the greatest concern to the defender of Plato's character, the question of his responsibility for Dion's *coup d'état*, and the tragedy of Dion's subsequent career.

Is it justifiable, with Crossman, to speak of Plato's guilt in sending Dion to his death, and the direful international effect of his policy in weakening the protective power of the Syracusan empire and thus preparing the downfall of Sicilian Greece before the Carthaginians? And what of Popper's accusation that in the concluding chapter of Dion's life is written a final indictment of Plato and his whole Academy, as, respectively, the sponsor and the training-ground for tyrants preparing the most ruthless use of power?

The Seventh Letter tells of the meeting between Plato, freshly returned from Syracuse, and the exiled Dion, deprived of family and fortune, at the Olympic festival in 360 B.C. On hearing of Dionysius' continued refusal to restore his rights, Dion resolved upon a punitive expedition against the tyrant, and invoked the aid of Plato and his friends. Personal participation Plato declined, urging his age and his reluctance to involve himself in violent action against a man whose hospitality he had received, and with whom he would prefer to help Dion to a reconciliation; but he made no attempt to prevent Dion from appealing to their mutual friends for assistance in his enterprise.

We may pass rapidly over the events immediately following this interview: Dion's gathering of a heroically small band of friends and mercenaries, their entry into Syracuse almost unopposed, and the subsequent naval and military engagements leading to Dion's complete victory. But we must look more closely at the events that now ensued. Dion's position, though externally supreme, was insecure at the foundation. He was separated by temperament and by principle from the Syracusan populace, who were clamoring for a restora-

which each state was bound to assist the others against any internal threat to their constitutions, while together they were to stand opposed to the Persian danger. Mor-

row has suggested (pp. 144-145) that Plato may have had in mind such an arrangement in Sicily.

³²⁰ See also p. 229 above.

vised laws and their persuasive preambles. At this point it might have appeared to him possible to apply the sort of legislative restrictions on wealth and poverty that we find him building into the constitution of the *Laws*, and to encourage that voluntary surrender of surplus wealth to which we earlier referred.³¹⁸

Reverting now to the sentence containing the enigmatic reference to "first" and "second best" plans, we have seen that there is no certainty that these terms are used in the full sense they bear in Plato's theoretic writings. The alternative reading of the riddle, confirmed by the whole tenor of the letter, is that by "first" Plato meant "first under the circumstances," and that the term embraces, over and above the excellences common to all the plans, the unique advantages of the original hope, chief among which had been a code of expertly designed laws, the undisturbed continuance of civic peace, and the wholesome influence upon the Hellenic and barbarian world of the spectacle of so momentous a revolution achieved by persuasion, not by force. These high aims Plato could not have thought beneath the dignity of a true philosopher; he would not have scrupled to call them "first" in excellence among plans possible of accomplishment.

What has just been said contains an implied answer to Crossman's suggestion that Plato hoped to reorganize the Greek cities of Sicily into a brood of ideal states under the headship of Dionysius the philosopher king. If, as we have sought to show, Plato did not think it possible to attempt an undiminished ideal state at Syracuse, he would surely not have ventured upon the wholesale manufacture of Republics throughout Sicily. We may conceive these cities rather as so many constitutional monarchies, or perhaps, Solonian aristocracies. And it is also improbable that Plato would have wished to keep them under Dionysius' rule. In the Seventh Letter Plato pictures his ideal of the rebuilt cities as bound together in friendship, by "laws and constitutions" and by loyalty to the reformed Dionysius, into an alliance against the threatening barbarians.³¹⁹ If we are permitted here to read in evidence

³¹⁸ See pp. 353-354. There is no direct depreciation of wealth in Letter VII, though Plato's disapprobation of luxury and the unbounded pursuit of pleasure is emphasized. In the Eighth Letter (355 A-C), the pursuit of wealth in preference to the goods of the soul and of the body is strongly denounced and it is recommended that the principle of the subordination of wealth be made the basis of the legal system.

³¹⁹ VII, 331 D-332 E. It is true that both the Persian empire under Darius and the Athenian empire are mentioned as proofs of the advantages to a ruler of having loyal friends who help him maintain his power

(332 A-C); but there is also strong disapproval of the practice of exacting tribute from subject states for the benefit of the sovereign city (351 B). It is probable, therefore, that the element of loyalty was being singled out, in the case of the two empires, for its edifying effect on the mind of Dionysius, and that the power in question was to be not imperial power, but the power of defeating the barbarians by means of the loyal cooperation of the reestablished and emancipated Sicilian cities. In the *Laws* (684 A-B) we have Plato's picture of a league between Argos, Messene, and Sparta, of a type which he strongly approved, in

tion of democracy and a redistribution of land; he lacked the support of the wealthy, who had little sympathy with his soaring principles and still less with the heavy taxation which he was forced to impose upon them in order to pay the mercenary troops in his employ. And worse, his authority was increasingly threatened by the maneuvers and intrigues of his associate Heraclides. Repeatedly this man's endeavors to displace Dion in popular esteem (as, for example, by proposing the redistribution of land, and by spreading personal calumnies), and even his communication with the enemy, were magnanimously forgiven by the principled moralist Dion, until at last, forced to an issue, Dion connived at his rival's assassination. From this time on, he appeared to the public mind hardly distinguishable from the usual tyrant.

But Dion had not abandoned his intention of setting the city under the reign of law, an ideal to which, as we have seen, Plato had converted him at the very outset. He had, in fact, already sent to Corinth for a deputation to assist him in his work of legislation when he was struck down by a group of conspirators headed by his unfaithful friend Callippus, who then usurped his rule. Callippus (so it is reported) had been associated with the Academy, though but distantly; and the whole incident could be interpreted to Plato's hurt, and to the discrediting of his political ideals.³²¹

These, then, are the hard facts of the case, as nearly as they can be gathered from the record. The rest is a problem in casuistry, a balancing of rights and wrongs one against another. As to Plato's responsibility for Dion's attempt to overthrow the rule of Dionysius, it is to be remembered that Dion was no ingenuous youth to whom Plato stood in *loco parentis*. He was a free moral agent, a man in middle life with a long experience of the world behind him. His previous behavior to Dionysius would seem to have been exemplary. We have seen the benevolent program he had hoped to realize for Sicily under the rule of a philosophically reformed Dionysius II; there was in this no attempt to secure the power, as he might well have done, for himself or for his nearer kinsmen. And now, it would seem, he had every provocation and justification, both personal and in the interests, as he saw them, of the people of Syracuse, for wishing to end the existing regime, which was, after all — let us not forget — a tyranny. If Plato, as we have seen, refrained from prejudg-

³²¹ Plato's enemies in antiquity did not fail to exploit the supposed connection to infer an inner bond between tyrannic violence and Platonic philosophy. Wilamowitz, *Platon*, Berlin 1948, p. 432, while accepting the tradition that Callippus was associated with the Academy (based on Athenaeus XI, 508, and Diog. Laertius, iii, 46), argues that his immersion during the same period in military, political, and legal activities precluded any real participation in the life of the school. Taylor (*Plato*, p. 8) is inclined

to question the tradition, arguing that it conflicts with the statement in the Seventh Letter (333 D-E) that Dion's acquaintance with Callippus was not grounded in the common pursuit of philosophy but upon comembership in a club and shared religious rites. It does appear unlikely that the author of the letter would have laid himself open to a charge of insincerity by glossing over a public fact of this nature, if it was a fact.

ing what Dion or his own friends ought to do, this was perhaps because on both sides of the question he could see approvable motives as possible determinants of action.

But what of Dion's later acts, which despite their apparent violence and injustice, did not shake Plato's approval of their author? Our interest in all this lies not so much in the presumed degree of Dion's guilt as in Plato's estimate thereof; we are concerned with the judging of Plato's judgment of Dion, as we were earlier concerned with his judgment of Critias, for the light it throws upon his moral standpoint. And we possess in this case of Dion one distinct contribution to clarity which was lacking to us in the case of Critias: we have under Plato's name (and from his hand, if the letters are indeed Plato's) an evaluation of the man in question, clearly related to Plato's view of those very acts and policies upon which others have grounded their attack.

Is it conceivable that Plato approved what Dion did to the full extent of justifying the assassination of Heraclides as a necessity to right rule? This man stood between Dion and his goal; he had shown himself "incurable" by his incapacity to respond to Dion's example of enlightened forbearance; he had proved himself to be one of those impurities that a good legislator must purge away for the sake of the public health. These are plausible considerations, and with some adjustment we may accord them our assent. Plato has given us a clue in the Seventh Letter (351 D-E), in his statement that Dion's fall was not caused by his failure to recognize the iniquity of the men he had to deal with, but by his failure to judge the extreme degree of their iniquity. This might be interpreted to imply not only that had Dion possessed this discernment, he would have guarded himself against his assassins, but also that he would (and should) have dealt more firmly with Heraclides in the first instance, and would not then have been forced into a position which only tyrannical acts could maintain. In short, it is probable that Plato would have endorsed the execution of Heraclides after an open inquiry and establishment of his guilt. If Plato is to be indicted for this judgment, it must be on the premises of a thoroughgoing opponent of capital punishment or of violent revolution. *Inter arma silent leges* is a principle of obvious application to the state of things in the midst of a revolution, when, in the overthrow of accustomed authority, courts martial alone can sit.

In addition to the assassination of Heraclides, other offenses have been laid at Dion's door. But these charges are not very well evidenced. Dion, it appears, had a "bad press" in the persons of contemporary observers and recorders whose hostile accounts found their way into the works of later historians.³⁷² In these circumstances, it is entirely possible that the picture of

tion of democracy and a redistribution of land; he lacked the support of the wealthy, who had little sympathy with his soaring principles and still less with the heavy taxation which he was forced to impose upon them in order to pay the mercenary troops in his employ. And worse, his authority was increasingly threatened by the maneuvers and intrigues of his associate Heraclides. Repeatedly this man's endeavors to displace Dion in popular esteem (as, for example, by proposing the redistribution of land, and by spreading personal calumnies), and even his communication with the enemy, were magnanimously forgiven by the principled moralist Dion, until at last, forced to an issue, Dion connived at his rival's assassination. From this time on, he appeared to the public mind hardly distinguishable from the usual tyrant.

But Dion had not abandoned his intention of setting the city under the reign of law, an ideal to which, as we have seen, Plato had converted him at the very outset. He had, in fact, already sent to Corinth for a deputation to assist him in his work of legislation when he was struck down by a group of conspirators headed by his unfaithful friend Callippus, who then usurped his rule. Callippus (so it is reported) had been associated with the Academy, though but distantly; and the whole incident could be interpreted to Plato's hurt, and to the discrediting of his political ideals.²²¹

These, then, are the hard facts of the case, as nearly as they can be gathered from the record. The rest is a problem in casuistry, a balancing of rights and wrongs one against another. As to Plato's responsibility for Dion's attempt to overthrow the rule of Dionysius, it is to be remembered that Dion was no ingenuous youth to whom Plato stood in *loco parentis*. He was a free moral agent, a man in middle life with a long experience of the world behind him. His previous behavior to Dionysius would seem to have been exemplary. We have seen the benevolent program he had hoped to realize for Sicily under the rule of a philosophically reformed Dionysius II; there was in this no attempt to secure the power, as he might well have done, for himself or for his nearer kinsmen. And now, it would seem, he had every provocation and justification, both personal and in the interests, as he saw them, of the people of Syracuse, for wishing to end the existing regime, which was, after all — let us not forget — a tyranny. If Plato, as we have seen, refrained from prejudg-

²²¹ Plato's enemies in antiquity did not fail to exploit the supposed connection to infer an inner bond between tyrannic violence and Platonic philosophy. Wilamowitz, *Platon*, Berlin 1948, p. 432, while accepting the tradition that Callippus was associated with the Academy (based on Athenaeus XI, 508, and Diog. Laertius, III, 46), argues that his immersion during the same period in military, political, and legal activities precluded any real participation in the life of the school. Taylor (*Plato*, p. 8) is inclined

to question the tradition, arguing that it conflicts with the statement in the Seventh Letter (333 D-E) that Dion's acquaintance with Callippus was not grounded in the common pursuit of philosophy but upon comradeship in a club and shared religious rites. It does appear unlikely that the author of the letter would have laid himself open to a charge of insincerity by glossing over a public fact of this nature, if it was a fact.

ing what Dion or his own friends ought to do, this was perhaps because on both sides of the question he could see approvable motives as possible determinants of action.

But what of Dion's later acts, which despite their apparent violence and injustice, did not shake Plato's approval of their author? Our interest in all this lies not so much in the presumed degree of Dion's guilt as in Plato's estimate thereof; we are concerned with the judging of Plato's judgment of Dion, as we were earlier concerned with his judgment of Critias, for the light it throws upon his moral standpoint. And we possess in this case of Dion one distinct contribution to clarity which was lacking to us in the case of Critias: we have under Plato's name (and from his hand, if the letters are indeed Plato's) an evaluation of the man in question, clearly related to Plato's view of those very acts and policies upon which others have grounded their attack.

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³²² See Morrow, *op. cit.*, pp. 167, 28. We have, however, been unable to find in the chapters of Nepos (*Dion*, 6, 7) cited by Morrow any reference to Dion's use of his

mercenary troops against the citizens, which Morrow found there, and which Bluck (*Plato's Seventh and Eighth Letters*, p. 17, n. 4) also reports.

Dion which we possess shows features that Plato had no need to condone, for the sufficient reason that they were absent from the original. Dion may have done nothing more tyrannical than to impose heavy assessments upon the wealthier citizens, necessary for the support of his soldiers. The employment of such mercenaries was in itself no badge of tyranny; in the fourth century it was the established practice, followed at Athens as well as elsewhere, and always they had to be paid. If Plato knew of these reports of Dion's high-handed actions, as he did know that Dion had been accused at Syracuse of intending to make himself tyrant, we cannot doubt that he interpreted them in the light of what he believed to be his own knowledge of Dion's character, as calumnies.³²³ They thus become matter of indifference to us in our investigation of Plato's standards of the morally approvable.

But after all possible discounts of hostile exaggeration, there remained in the record of Dion's revolution the stubborn fact that by his overthrow of Dionysius he had touched off a train of events that kept Sicily embroiled in civil turmoil for many a year. When Plato composed his defense of Dion, included in the Seventh and Eighth letters, this disorder was in full career. We must ask: did Plato regard it with complacency, as perhaps a negligible price to pay for the noble risk of attempting the venture of philosophic government? No attentive reader of the letters can carry away the impression that Plato had urged Dion to the enterprise. At Olympia he had still spoken of a reconciliation. His account of Dion's aims repeats with emphasis his conviction that Dion had sought to achieve his purposes without causing the death of a single citizen.³²⁴ If Plato was willing to condone some mistakes of Dion, even some injustices, this forgiveness is founded upon his confidence not alone in the unselfish excellence of Dion's aims, but also in the scrupulousness of his choice of means.

It will be recalled that Crossman has held Plato accountable for the subsequent collapse of the Sicilian empire and the later victory of the barbarians. This is what seems an unmerited compliment to the stability of the Sicilian tyranny in the ineffective hands of Dionysius II or his hypothetical successors. Quite possibly one might have found, in the fourth century, more reliable

³²³ In Letter VII, 351 A-C, Plato seems to be defending Dion against calumnies by repudiating the notion that Dion could have been guilty of such actions as confiscating the wealth of the few to distribute it to the many, proscribing wealthy citizens in order to enrich his friends, or collecting tribute from subject cities for the benefit of the capital city. We know from Plutarch (*Dion*, xxxvii, 3) that Heraclides had in fact proposed the redistribution of wealth, and it is therefore possible that some other person or persons involved in the Syracusan disorders

had committed the other acts which Plato disapproves; but there is more reason to believe that Plato is here making counter-accusations against the fellow partisans of the critics of Dion than that he is defending Dion against charges of having been guilty of the injustices mentioned.

³²⁴ VII, 351 C. The Loeb Library translator, Bury, by an emendation apparently supported by no *ms.*, reads *ho ti* for *ou ti*, and accordingly translates, "by means of the fewest possible exiles and executions."

forecasters of coming events, better guides to prudential political policy, than was Plato, the court of history has ruled that he was in error in pinning his faith on the viability of the independent city state under the pressure of the coming conquerors. But our concern is not with Plato as historical prophet or far seeing practical statesman, perceptive beyond the level of the well informed and sensible man of his day. His attainments in these respects do not affect our purpose of showing him clear of the imputations of frenzied ambition, criminal complaisance, and general bad faith, which threaten to hide from us the actual integrity of his political commitments.

We may treat more briefly the record contained in Letter VII, and also in Letter VIII, of Plato's later plans for the ordering of Syracusan institutions, called forth by the failure to convert Dionysius and by the death of Dion. We are told (VII, 337 D, VIII, 357 A) that these plans were, in essence, the same which Dion while he lived had hoped to accomplish for Syracuse, but they clearly contain some adaptations to later circumstances. The situation obviously required still further abatement from Plato's maximum demands. Accordingly we shall be able to see what things he was prepared to sacrifice and what things he felt indispensable to a decent arrangement of political affairs. We shall find that he believed it necessary and possible even now to attempt the realization of a considerable part of the basic requirements laid down in the *Laws* for a "second best" state.

In the Seventh Letter Plato, seeking to heal the breach between the relatives and friends of Dion, to whom the letter is immediately addressed, and their opponents in Syracuse, recommends the calling in of a legislative commission,³²⁵ chosen from the whole of Greece, not excluding Athens, "for there too there are those who surpass all men in virtue" (336 D). These commissioners are to be

men who are in the first place old and who have wives and children at home and forefathers as numerous and good and famous as possible and who are all in possession of ample property. These men they should fetch from their homes by means of entreaties and the greatest possible honors, and when they have fetched them they should entreat and enjoin them to frame laws under oath that they will give no advantage either to conquerors or conquered but equal rights in common to the whole city. And when the laws have been laid down then everything depends upon the following condition: if the victors prove themselves subservient to the laws more than the vanquished then all things will abound in safety and happiness (337 B-D).³²⁶

It is interesting to note that Plato has, by his choice of prerequisites for membership in the commission, both excluded himself and all but the senior members of his Academy, and as a loyal Athenian included some of his fellow citizens. Plato's patriotism is also attested in a passage of Letter VII, 334 B,

³²⁵ Or perhaps one commission for Syracuse, and one for each of the other cities to

be reestablished in Sicily.
³²⁶ Trans. Bury. Loeb Library.

where Plato, concerned lest the depravity of Dion's Athenian assassins work injury to the good repute of his native city, with pardonable pride adduces himself and his freedom from corruption as a contrary instance of Athenian good faith.

The Eighth Letter purports to have been written some months later, when the conflict had become a three-cornered civil war between the party of Dion and that of the exiled Dionysius, with the advocates of a restored democracy taking the field against both. The recommendation of a legislative commission is again made, this time with the addition of a constitution briefly outlined (356 C-357 A). There are to be three kings, the respective heads of the three factions, but their powers are more symbolic than substantial; they are denied the right to exile, banish, or put to death citizens. For the rest, what we are told of the constitution strikingly resembles that of the *Laws*, upon which Plato was supposedly working at the time. This is the system to which Crossman refers as that of "cabinet responsibility to a popular assembly." It is to be a mixed or balanced government, with power divided between a board of Law-wardens, a council, and an assembly of the citizens.³²⁷ There are to be popular courts, but all capital cases are to be decided by a higher court composed of Law-wardens and ex-magistrates.³²⁸ And this constitution is averred (357 A) to be that which Dion, after his capture of power, had intended to institute.

Plato retains his interest in the resettlement of the Greek cities of Sicily; his philhellenism is still in full flood (357 A-B). Meanwhile he urges immediate cessation of internecine conflict and a policy of conciliation (352 E ff.). There is much talking down of the importance of wealth (355 A-C), again in conformity with many passages in the *Laws*. And throughout, the utmost importance is attached to the rule of law, which is to exercise "despotic sway over the kings themselves as well as the rest of the citizens" (355 E).³²⁹ Of great interest to us for the backward light it throws upon Plato's and Dion's original plan for Sicilian reform is the declaration that Plato's present advice is the same as "the counsel I gave of old. And now also my word of advice to every despot would be that he should shun the despot's title and his task, and change his despotism for kingship" (354 A).³³⁰

By the aid of these statements regarding Plato's and Dion's earlier intentions we are enabled, by stages, to infer our way back to the general nature of the original plan. The finally proposed constitution is declared to be the same, with minor exceptions, as the program that Dion would have carried out after the expulsion of Dionysius; in the Seventh Letter, as we have reported, Plato had declared that what Dion would have accomplished under

³²⁷ The assembly is apparently open to all citizens, without property qualification. This is rendered probable by the consideration that property restriction would have made the "compromise" (VIII, 355 C-E) unacceptable to the democratic faction at

Syracuse, and by analogy with the *Laws*.

³²⁸ The similar arrangements in the *Laws* are described at *Laws* 752 D ff., 756 B f., 764 A, 766 D, 767 C, 855 C f.

³²⁹ Trans. Bury, Loeb Library.

³³⁰ Trans. Bury, Loeb Library.

these same circumstances would have contributed as much to the cause of philosophy and to the benefit of mankind as could have been achieved had Dionysius proved capable of all that Plato hoped. We must, of course, not mistake these substantial similarities for outright identities. The final plan was, admittedly, a dilution of a second plan (the one in which Dion was central), which was itself an unwelcome alternative to the original, which revolved about Dionysius. But enough remained to determine an important measure of agreement. There was, in any case, to be a constitution, which would impose substantial limitations upon the power of the king. The powers thus lost would necessarily have been transferred to certain other legally established authorities. The Seventh Letter did not tell us how these other authorities were to be constituted, but from the assertions of the Eighth Letter, quoted above, it is a reasonable inference that the framework of kings, Law wardens, council, popular assembly, and courts of appeal was part of the original scheme, with the single structural difference that, in the first and second versions, there would have been but one king. If these inferences are sound, the conclusion that no attempt to reproduce the Republic was ever under view, needs no further proof, and it is clearly the framework of the city of the *Laws*, with the addition of a philosophically virtuous monarch, which Plato's original plan for Syracuse had more closely resembled. And now, from this he had been obliged to accept a reduction and again a further reduction.

It is plain to see how the two "second best" plans for Sicily represent an abatement from Plato's ideal of the practicable best. In the first place, while Plato was by no means willing, as Crossman has said he was, that "the best of the existing aristocracy should become dictators," it appears that he was willing to concede, as a practical expedient and part of the "second best" plan, that they should serve as legislative commissioners. As we have seen, Plato believed, not without some justification in the actual social conditions of his day, that effective intelligence was more likely to be found among the wealthy, who could afford the luxury of leisure and education, and believed also, apparently, that a distinguished family was a fairly reliable index of human quality as judged at a distance. Presumably he also thought that wealth would render the commissioners proof against the influence of bribes and that their lineage would lend prestige to the results of their labors. We can regret that Plato failed to see, as we so clearly discern, that fifty men of property, chosen neither as social philosophers nor as philanthropic saints, however disinterested they might be in relation to persons and to local issues, would be very likely to legislate in favor of their own economic class. As at least a partial offset to this tendency, however, we may remember that the Eighth Letter (and perhaps the Seventh Letter intended to do the same)²³¹

writings had led their readers to expect he would attempt, namely: the conversion of one person in authority, or at most of a few such persons, to sympathy with his aims, in the expectation that their already existing power would then suffice to achieve reform. As practical policy, this may not have been wise. But as the honest and energetic effort of a man who, having abandoned hope of finding support among the common people, and having also renounced violence, had left himself no other avenue toward his cherished goals, it commands respect and puts beyond question his sincerity.

In the chapter just behind us we have defended Plato as man and political philosopher against the charge that Plato the aristocrat had corrupted both. We have agreed with all the detractors and with all the world beside, that Plato was born and died an aristocrat. Our thesis has been that in the interval between these two events something of importance happened, namely, a life devoted in great part to an honest, able, and fruitful effort to develop a system of universally applicable political principles embodying the Socratic demand that moral wisdom should be sovereign over appetite, passion, and power, principles possible for adoption, in whole or in part, by his sadly distracted or blindly self-complacent fellow countrymen. We have expressed our regret that his understanding of the common man and of the moral values of democracy fell short of the general level of his thought; but his deficient trust in the common man did not imply a lack of concern for him and the protection of his interests. The principles he sought were not for the particular benefit of any group, but were designed to serve the interests of all classes of the community. In his pursuit of these aims, his thought more and more divested itself of prejudice, and though to the end of his life one can find him guilty of lapses into the old familiar mode, his conscious thought had so far transcended aristocratic bias that, with some concessions to social inertia, he could treat as hollow all claims to special prerogatives based on wealth or birth, and could regard as worthy of respect, though in some cases likely to be morally harmful, any socially useful task.

As an Athenian among Athenians, he cast off all party allegiance, scorning the selfishness and venality and repudiating the violence of the oligarchs, no less than he deplored the inconstancy and blind passion of the democrats. It is, we saw, an illusion to suppose that the right course had been clearly and unequivocally charted for him by a unanimous band of *illuminati* whose wisdom he rejected and betrayed. Instead, he was confronted with a welter of conflicting claims and creeds unable to stand up against the merciless scrutiny of the one man, Socrates, who seemed to Plato to have founded the method and indicated the goal which alone could lead out of the intolerable confusions and miseries visible to him on every hand, miseries inseparable, he believed, from all existing politics. What Plato hoped, then, was not a rejuvenation of the Old Oligarch or a restaging, with improved scenery, and with him-

self as protagonist, of the crimes of Critias. He disavowed the way of violence and continued by all legitimate roads open to a philosopher to promote, by his writing and his influence upon his pupils, his cherished dream of civic mutuality and virtue founded upon wisdom. His first meeting with Dion had given him, however, a point of attachment to the world of political reality, and when the call to action came, clear of all commitment to revolutionary violence, he responded, sacrificing personal convenience and incurring mortal risk to vindicate the cause he held most vital to the welfare of mankind.

It was our pleasure to observe the development of his political thinking as it moved toward fuller recognition of the value of the once slighted democratic principle. He had, indeed, never seriously held that a community this side of political paradise could endure without a substantial degree of popular control. But in the *Laws*, the ripest fruit of his thought, we find him explicitly advocating, for the government of his semi-ideal city, the "well-tempered" constitution, in which all citizens possess not merely civil but also active political rights. We may say of him that his opposition to democracy was for subjectively right reasons, that he did not consciously turn his back on any clearly envisaged human good, and that through it all, he was pursuing ends which, though we today seek them through the medium of democracy, we must still pursue.



Was Plato an Abnormal Personality?

The Charge of Duplicity and Inner Division

In this final chapter on Plato the man we must answer on his behalf the last and most extreme of the accusations preferred against him. These charges have almost all been foreshadowed in our earlier discussion. Some further extensions and intensifications of Plato's supposed guilt will be examined, but the important novelty will consist in a more detailed reporting of the evidence adduced, and in our point-for-point reply. We shall be dealing principally with Popper, reënforced at some points by Plato's other critics; and it is our intention to allow the very intensity and extravagance of the accusations to play a major part in the drama of their own refutation.

It will be remembered from previous citations that the Plato who has excited Popper's moral indignation is no ordinary villain in simple and single-minded pursuit of wicked ends. What Popper sees in the soul of Plato is a conjunction, an interaction of impulses and ideals, some tintured with nobility, others (and these by far the more numerous) frankly despicable. The principal basis of this conception of Platonic duality is not far to seek.

Popper has discovered in the *Republic* a Platonic Socrates who expresses "righteous contempt" for slaves, scorn of "the human cattle whose sole function is to provide for the material needs of the ruling class," "oligarchic inclinations," and all the other iniquities which we have reviewed in previous chapters. These same views Popper finds reappearing in Plato's later dialogues, expressed sometimes by other speakers. Even in some passages of the *Gorgias*, an earlier dialogue, Plato presents us with a Socrates whose utterances constitute "treacherous oligarchic propaganda against the open society, and especially against its representative, Athens."¹

On the other hand, we have seen how, for Popper, Socrates was in his

¹ Popper, p. 593.

proper person the very incarnation of the values of "openness," the foremost champion of humanitarianism and the democratic cause which was sponsored by the Great Generation and supported by the mass of the Athenian citizenry. And for his knowledge of this great man, Popper relies chiefly upon certain of the earlier Platonic dialogues, hailing as Socrates' veritable "last will" and testament the *Apology* and *Crito*, in which (though Popper does not stress the point) this same Plato displays his full and reverent acceptance of the Socratic message. Nor could Popper, indeed, dispense with Plato as witness for this individualist, this libertarian, this admirably undogmatic Socrates; for were Popper required to extract the essential Socrates from Xenophon and Aristophanes, he would find it difficult to canonize him as the saint of critical dualism.

From the dilemma posed by this antinomy between opposing Platonic pictures of Socrates, neither term of which he was prepared to deny or modify, Popper has found it possible to escape by the construction of a hypothesis: Plato genuinely, under the inspiration of the Socratic teaching, abandoned for a time his oligarchic predisposition, and during this blessed interval had been able truly to depict his admirably democratic master. But he soon reverted to his sympathy for the program of the Old Oligarch and Critias, and began a progressive misrepresentation of Socrates resulting in the transformation which we find fully achieved in the *Republic*.

Even in the *Crito* there may be, Popper feels, one or two traces of Plato's deceiving subtlety; in the *Meno*, he detects surviving traces of Socratic humanitarianism.² Though the *Gorgias* is still largely Socratic, it contains also, as we have heard, an admixture of Platonic illiberalism which Socrates himself, had he lived to know of it, "would . . . have loathed." Plato, in short, the "least faithful" disciple, has "betrayed Socrates," has "tried to implicate" him in his own oligarchic endeavors, has wrongfully made into the semblance of an ally an opponent, helpless because he was dead, "whose overwhelming strength he would never have dared to attack directly."³

Popper had now to decide whether this misrepresentation was intentional-vicious or unconscious-forgivable, and chose both. In the space of three or four pages, he tells us in uneasy alternation, that Plato "retained Socrates as his main speaker even after he had departed so widely from his teaching that he could no longer deceive himself about this deviation"; that Plato "discovered, perhaps unconsciously," the Pareto device of cynical propaganda; and that Plato "succeeded in persuading himself" of the beauty and justice of his antihumanitarian aims. By virtue of one term of this unresolved contradiction, Popper must be supposed to justify the bitter indignation which, as we have seen, he so frequently expresses against Plato's "treachery," "dishon-

² See pp. 148-149 above.

³ Other references for this paragraph are

to be found in Popper, pp. 593, 596; 189-191.

esty," and "libeling" of his master. He reads the *Republic* and other dialogues of Plato's later periods with a suspicious eye, and discovers evidences of despicable chicanery, calculated to deceive a guileless reader,⁴ on many a page.

On the other hand, the possibility of unconscious, almost unwilling desertion of the Socratic teaching gives rise to the conception of a "titanic struggle in Plato's mind,"⁵ a soul "disunited and inharmonious,"⁶ deep suffering, and a conflict which "touches our feelings" also, and enables us, though we cannot approve, to sympathize and forgive. This second explanation of Plato's duplicity permits Popper to appear in the role of tolerant spectator of human frailty, while accounting also for the presence of those unspecified traces of genuine humanitarian zeal which Popper professes to detect in the whole tendency of Plato's political message.⁷

We touch here upon what is certainly one of the strangest features of Popper's whole book, the fact that after all the pages in which are described Plato's inhumanity, scorn, and callous disregard of the interests of the common people, his claim to aristocratic privilege for himself and for his "master class," Popper in his final chapter looks back over his demonstration that Plato wished to establish a regime in Athens indistinguishable from the most ruthless totalitarianism, and comments that he feels this view to be "defective," since it fails to account for "Plato's sincere belief in his mission as healer of the sick social body." We have not been properly prepared for his declaration, "I . . . grant his fundamental benevolence," nor for the sudden disclosure that Plato's strongest motive was the desire to help the people, who, "frightened by the breakdown of their 'natural' world," suffered and were unhappy.⁸ This generosity on Popper's part is somewhat tempered in its effect by his further statement that the example of Plato has taught him to see in a new light totalitarianism in general: it has made him aware that totalitarianism attempts to answer, though in a mistaken way, "a very real need," and hence is to be viewed with a large tolerance. This forgiveness he extends in equal degrees, apparently, to both the Platonic and the modern forms.⁹

Popper's demotion of Plato's benevolence to the level of a Hitler's or a Stalin's cannot be welcome to Plato's friends. And it is rendered still less acceptable by the notable fact that Popper, in thus altering his general characterization of Plato's political thought, has cited no Platonic passage in which he is willing to recognize evidence of Plato's good will. We think back over some of the passages we ourselves have cited — the myth of the metals,

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 191-194; e g., pp. 148 and 103.

⁵ Popper, p. 191.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 606.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109. Popper here says that his "personal impression" favors the hypothesis of inner struggle in Plato; yet he leaves unaltered the numerous expressions throughout the book which testify to

his predominant assumption that Plato is cynically deceptive; and such, despite his intermittent assertions of his contrary "impression," is the effect of his exposition as a whole.

⁸ Popper, pp. 166, 172, 192.

⁹ Popper, p. 166.

in which the citizens of the ideal state are enjoined to regard one another as brothers, the provision that the rulers shall receive no more than a modest maintenance from the common citizens, in return for devoted service, the prescription that the rulers are to regard their humbler fellow citizens as "Nurturers," while these are to think of them as "Helpers." On which of these passages (if he has mentioned them at all) has Popper not cast implications of cynical pretense, calling them "propaganda" or worse? ¹⁰

We seem forced to the conclusion that Popper did not begin with a recognition of Plato's benevolence, but that his new insight has arisen out of his acquaintance with the recently developed concept of the strain of decision entailed by freedom, and the corresponding release offered by sheltering authority. Having first seen in this concept an explanation of the willingness of many millions of our contemporaries to submit themselves to totalitarian direction,¹¹ he has next miraculously inferred from the need of the submissive many for shelter, a benevolent aim on the part of those who offer them this baneful protection, and he has then admitted Plato to the same exoneration. In any case, we cannot accept his amazing offer on Plato's behalf. Plato is indeed in need of some forgiveness for his advocacy of paternalistic government. But his benevolence is not that which Popper accredits to totalitarianism, nor is there any slightest evidence that the concept of the "escape from freedom" ever entered his consciousness.

We are thus brought to see that Popper's hypothesis of Plato's duplicity in presenting the thought of Socrates, his entire conception of Plato as either dishonest or self-deceived, or, perhaps, as deeply self-divided, rests primarily on the following foundations: on the one hand, upon the ascription of black totalitarianism to the later Plato, on the other, upon the shining picture of Socrates as chief embodiment of the faith of the Great Generation and of democratic Athens, and upon the just described airy insubstantial attribution to the later Plato of that supposed remnant of Socratic humanitarianism, his desire to relieve the common people of the strain of decision. Only if these three premises are granted, is there any ground for Popper's conclusion.¹² In

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, e.g. pp. 48-552.

¹¹ This concept has been employed for explaining the psychological appeal of fascism in our day (but without imputing 'benevolence' to the dictators themselves), by Erich Fromm in his *Escape from Freedom*, discussed in our text pp. 483f., 493f.

¹² In order to render his hypothesis of Plato's betrayal of Socrates less "fantastic" than "it may appear to Platonists," Popper has also adduced (pp. 653-654) what he deems Fichte's perfidious perversion of the thought of his "master," Kant. Yet this supposed parallel may lend probability rather

to a quite different hypothesis: namely Popper's transfer of the pattern of betrayal from the one case to the other. There can be observed in Warner Fite a readiness to discover the littleness of a great man: be he Plato or be he the founder of Christianity see his *Deflationary Jesus the Man* 1946. *passim* Popper has a readiness apparently to see a great man's thought wrongfully misrepresented by those who come after and pose as his admirers. The extent to which this tendency can carry him is measured by his ability to believe that Burnet and Taylor Platonists that they are have

so far, then, as we have succeeded and shall succeed in destroying the picture of the blackly totalitarian Plato and in tempering with factual reservations that of Socrates and his contemporaries, we shall have accomplished, in major part, our refutation of Popper's hypothesis: there is simply no need of it. The great betrayal of Socrates turns out to have been, rather, a heroic effort on the part of a loyal disciple to carry to its fulfilment the change in outlook upon human concerns, individual and social, which Socrates had inaugurated, and Plato's effort to do so is shown to have been motivated, not by some special totalitarian benevolence, but by that same desire to share with others the happiness of a virtuous life which had led Socrates himself to question and instruct his fellow citizens.

But Popper has brought into the field subsidiary arguments in support of his hypothesis of betrayal, chief among which is a thesis which, though it is open, as we shall hope to show, to severe objection, possesses sufficient truth to be worthy of our close attention. Popper holds that it is possible to arrange the Platonic dialogues in a rough sequence on the basis of their progressive departure from an original Socratic base, established in the *Apology* and *Crito*, in the direction of an essential Platonism, observable in pure form in the *Laws*. (Readers of Jaeger's *Aristotle* will recall that scholar's brilliant if sometimes precarious reconstruction of the stages of Aristotle's gradual retreat from Plato and establishment of his own characteristic philosophy.) It is further claimed that these departures are systematic, displaying their influence in many crucial departments of Plato's thought, nine of which Popper specifies.¹³ Now in so far as these touch matters of moral and political import, our earlier discussion of the thought of Socrates has shown reason to deny the very existence of any such essential alteration; ¹⁴ Popper's belief is indeed made possible largely by his blindness to any evidence of tendencies which he himself disapproves in the Socrates of the early dialogues, and by his corresponding and converse refusal to understand the later Platonic writings. In Appendix XVI, we have argued that differences between Plato and

been guilty of misrepresenting Socrates, charging him by implication with lying in his own defense upon the witness stand (p. 600). All this tempts one to say that Popper's use of the analogy of Fichte's betrayal of Kant—whatever may be the facts of the case—suggests precisely that "fantastic" quality of Popper's argumentative mind which it is adduced on purpose to deny.

¹³ Popper, pp. 599–603. The first three criteria of change listed by Popper are not said, like the remaining six, to make possible the systematic ordering of the important dialogues as Plato's age advances, but

merely to differentiate decisively between the *Apology* and later dialogues. The list is as follows: (1) absence of interest and knowledge, *vs.* presence of both, concerning natural philosophy. (2) uncertainty *vs.* certainty regarding survival after death. (3) belief that the tolerant *vs.* the wise, should rule. (4) tolerance and trust *vs.* distrust, toward men, especially young men. (5) belief *vs.* disbelief in truth, free speech, and free thought. (6) intellectual modesty *vs.* dogmatism. (7) individualism *vs.* collectivism. (8) equalitarianism *vs.* belief in social status. (9) belief *vs.* disbelief in democracy.

¹⁴ See pp. 299–307; cf. also App. XVI.

Socrates in respect to Popper's two remaining indices of change¹⁵ are non-existent or irrelevant to the question of misrepresentation or "betrayal." But we would not wish to be understood as sponsors of the contrary error, blankly denying all differences between two closely related men who were nevertheless two men. We agree that the Platonic dialogues reveal evidence of progressive change. The compatibility of this agreement with the denial of the essential truth of Popper's thesis we must explain.

That a philosophic mind of the first magnitude such as Plato's should have spent its energies in the mere loyal reassertion of Socratic truths, is in itself incredible. Departures of some kind were inevitable. First and most natural of these would be the attempt to carry forward the results reached by the master, by the further application of his methods of inquiry to problems and situations to which Socrates had addressed himself only partially, or not at all. For example, there is no certainty that Socrates had ever attempted to delineate that type of social community which would arise, were his criticisms of the existing Athens to be written into one single, coherent constitution which would make possible the recommended improvement in the moral standards of all its citizens. In making that attempt, Plato produced his *Republic*, for Popper a betrayal of Socratic modesty and skepticism, for us a royal instance of a pupil's creative piety.

But it would be unfair to Plato as a creative thinker to represent his thought as merely the extension of that of Socrates. The dialogues constitute abundant evidence of insights extending into fields into which, to our best historical knowledge, Socrates had never stepped. Fertile elaboration of Pythagorean speculations about nature, such as the *Timaeus* provides, advanced mathematical knowledge, displayed even in the *Republic*, the metaphysical and epistemological refinements suggested in the *Sophist* and in the *Theaetetus*, move in a world far from that of Socrates. As this change progressed, it would become for Plato a matter of taste and judgment to decide, in connection with any given topic, whether new material should be put into the mouth of Socrates, or quoted by him as told him by another, or expressed by some other central speaker. And we may conjecture that whereas some extensions of Socratic ideas appeared to Plato so clearly in line with Socratic thought as to make their attribution to him not only fitting but due, others permitted only that Socrates should appear as interested listener, while still others required either a dramatic setting inappropriate to Socrates, or a method of treatment foreign to the Socratic ethos.¹⁶

¹⁵ See pp. 634 and 634-635 below.

¹⁶ Stenzel believed himself to have traced the course of Plato's philosophical development from his Socratic period to the period of the *Parmenides*, *Sophist*, and *Politicus*, dialogues which "show a fundamental change in Plato's doctrine" (*Plato's Meth-*

od of Dialectic, English translation, 1940, p. 16). In the light of his theory, he has suggested reasons for the changing role assigned to "Socrates" in the various dialogues. His case, though presented with great subtlety and skill, is unacceptable to me for reasons of which two may be men-

Yet in all Plato's growth and accumulation of trans-Socratic wisdom, the thought of his old master did not ever really lose its key position, was never shorn of its proper honor. It is in fact more surprising to observe the continued centrality and emphasis given to ideas already present in the earliest dialogues than to note the changes;¹⁷ and even in the work of Plato's latest years, were one to remove from it all that may fairly be called the Socratic base, it is no exaggeration to say that the entire structure would collapse.

For the reasons offered, then, we may reject Popper's thesis in the sense in which he has asserted it, while remaining free to agree that a process of orderly change can be traced from the *Apology* up to the *Laws*. Plato was no changeless Platonic idea; his "morning state" was not identical with that of his eventide. New interests emerged, his confidence rose and fell, he was, in short, subject to all the conditions of humanity. But from first to last, unswerving fidelity to the Socratic ideal of moral knowledge as the means to human happiness and as the key to the ordering of the universe was the unifying motive of his long and fruitful life.

As earlier mentioned, Popper now and again treats Plato as the divided soul in tragic conflict with its baser component; the alleged conflict itself is then employed as confirmation of Popper's thesis of betrayal. Popper feels this struggle by sheer intuition, with overtones of Faust, divining the existence of "two worlds" within the single soul of Plato. By a second intuition, he divines that generations of readers have shared his identical perception, that in fact this conflict is "the main secret of Plato's fascination," and an explanation of his great influence. Thus Popper's hypothesis of Plato's losing struggle with his inhumane impulses is given, or so it seems, collective confirmation.¹⁸ And to this Popper adds that the depth of Plato's suffering, his self-division and inner disharmony, are revealed by his conception of the human soul in the image of "a class-divided society."¹⁹

To all this one is tempted to make the briefest of all logical replies, *non sequitur*. One can grant, in some sense, all the premises, not the conclusion.

tioned here: (1) He has assumed too great a discontinuity between Plato's earlier and later thought. (2) His position requires him to put the *Phaedrus* among the late dialogues. As I have elsewhere explained (p. 96), I find it difficult to believe that the tumultuous Eros of the *Phaedrus* is the work of a man who had already depicted, in the *Republic*, the tranquil Eros with folded wings, or that the literary quality of the *Phaedrus* is compatible with a late date. The advanced position assigned to the dialogue by Stenzel to my mind accentuates these difficulties.

¹⁷ The reader is invited to compare the ideas we have pointed out in the *Apology* and *Crito* (pp. 302-304 above) with those affirmations in the *Republic* and *Laws* described, e.g., on pp. 519-521, and with the pervasive elements in his thought summarized on pp. 232 and 250-251.

¹⁸ Popper, p. 191, appears also to be implying that Plato's fascination for his readers arises from their own unconquered love of power and impulse to oppress others. See our discussion of this charge against Platonists, pp. 447ff. below.

¹⁹ Popper, pp. 108, 191, 606.

Plato had tensions in his soul, "two worlds" (properly interpreted) are in strife for its possession, Plato has been fascinating to many readers. We have elsewhere discussed some of the tensions and their significance, and again in the next section of this chapter we shall return to them.²⁰ No doubt the fascination of Plato is in part due to the urgency and force of his beliefs, the intensity of his emotional life, and the conflict within him between allegiance to ideal values and acceptance of actuality. Plato does indeed conceive the human soul, when unjust, as a "class divided society", by the same token, he conceives the soul of the temperate and just man as a society united to the uttermost by good will and mutual piety, and this unity, we agree with Popper, Plato struggled to attain. Between the full possession and the utter lack of what is good, we have heard Plato tell us, in the *Symposium* (204 A-B), is that intermediate state, proper to philosophers, the state of striving toward the good. It is extravagance to describe Plato's pursuit of inner harmony as a "division" or "split" in his soul, as it is a sheer assumption to diagnose it, with Popper, as the agonized conflict between oligarchic inclinations and the humanitarian faith.²¹ Plato's betrayal of Socrates receives no confirmation from any of these arguments.

But Popper has collected also certain specimens which we must not neglect to examine: there are Platonic works in which traces of the internal struggle itself, he believes, can be detected. The earliest of these traces Popper discovers in the *Euthyphro*, assumed by Popper, as his interpretation requires, to have been written after the *Apology* and *Crito*. This is a little dialogue wherein Socrates and Euthyphro, a professional diviner, discuss the nature of true piety or holiness, starting from a case of conscience complex enough in its legal and moral bearings to perplex a Hellenic Solomon: a blood-guilty laborer, or serf, of Euthyphro's, has been left fettered in a ditch by Euthyphro's father while a messenger was sent to Athens to determine what shall be done with him, and has died of the neglect; Euthyphro, fearing the ceremonial pollution which will come upon him from association with his father, is prosecuting him for homicide (4 A-E, 9 A-B). Socrates implies his doubt as to the propriety of this action by his ironical admiration for the exact knowledge of true piety which alone could embolden Euthyphro to such an act. What Popper conveys to his reader is the idea that the major purpose of Plato in writing this dialogue was to claim the authority of Socrates in support of his own antihumanitarian political program, for is not Socrates shown as arguing symbolically in favor of the oppressive ancestral social order by questioning the righteousness of extending protection to a

²⁰ See pp. 122-124 above, pp. 483-493 especially p. 492 below.

²¹ As we said above p. 69 Popper in his note p. 606 describes Plato's psychic state as a difficulty in controlling "animal

instincts" and by his comparison with Freudian doctrines implies that these are illudinous. Yet in his text (p. 191) he cites the same evidence as proof of the struggle against oligarchic impulses.

mere serf as against the sacredness of a father who had murdered him?²²

We must first pay tribute to the extreme logical neatness of this way of reading the dialogue, and then protest that Popper has achieved this neatness by imposing his own conception of the central aim of the dialogue, instead of permitting Plato to determine that center for him. That Plato should intend presenting a dramatic picture of the Socratic method applied to the examination and clarification of conflicts in traditional notions of piety — this accepted view of the purport and scope of the dialogue Popper brushes aside as the usual misinterpretation. At the focal point he places the social status of the victim, which we shall agree does possess a real if peripheral importance, but which Popper implies was the sole reason why Euthyphro's action was questioned by Plato. The fact that the man left to die had himself in a drunken rage killed Euthyphro's father's slave, and the further fact that the death was due to neglect and not to intention, Popper has not seen fit even to mention, with the result that Euthyphro's father is made to appear as a simple murderer, and in consequence Plato appears as one in whose eyes the murderer of a humble citizen is quite blameless in comparison with the impious prosecutor of a father.²³ No allowance is made for the possibility that the dialogue has reference to an actual occurrence, or that Socrates had in fact made it the occasion of such an inquiry as is here reported. Popper follows Grote in asserting that "every citizen was bound by Attic law to prosecute in such cases."²⁴ This, however, is open to serious doubt; Euthyphro perhaps had not even the right to bring suit for homicide, though he believed he did.²⁵ And in any case, it gives a false picture both of Euthyphro's motive, which was ceremonial-religious, and of Athenian actuality. The general moral sentiment did not enjoin the suing of a kinsman and would apparently have required Euthyphro to be silent and to run the risk of himself being sued for "sacrilege" (*asebeia*) rather than to bring suit against a father.²⁶ Popper's

²² Popper, pp. 191-192, 608.

²³ To most readers the disturbing feature of Plato's account will probably be the apparent insensibility of his Socrates to the suffering of the man in the ditch. We can see this in perspective only by remembering the rather widespread indifference to suffering among the Athenians of Plato's day, especially when the sufferer could be viewed as criminal. See our discussion of this, pp. 351f. above. The victim's status as common laborer does in our judgment increase for Plato the extravagance of Euthyphro's action, and this reflects Plato's (and also the general Athenian) estimate of the relative importance of persons; the tension is enhanced also by the high age of Euthyphro's father (4 A). But neither is given

equal weight with the violation of filial duty, the guilt of the laborer himself, and the nearly involuntary character of the father's crime.

²⁴ Popper, p. 608.

²⁵ Cf. Burnet, notes on *Euthyphro* 4 c 3, 5 e 3.

²⁶ For a discussion of similar cases, see Bonner and Smith, *The Administration of Justice from Homer to Aristotle*, 1938, pp. 216-217, where, following Glotz, it is declared that there is no record of the suing of a kinsman. It was necessary in such cases for a third party to bring a suit against some member of the homicide's family, in the settling of which the guilt of the supposed homicide was determined.

interpretation of the *Euthyphro* need not, in view of all these facts, be seriously regarded, and the curious set of circumstances involving Euthyphro and his father may once more be reasonably viewed as but an appropriately selected starting-point for a dialogue intended to clarify notions of piety.

A second and outstanding exhibit of sedition in Plato's soul Popper finds in the *Menexenus*, a dialogue which, as we have seen, he interprets as Plato's scurrilous attempt to pour ridicule upon Pericles and all that his name connoted of the high principles of Athenian democracy. What we must note here is Popper's assertion that Plato has revealed his own inner struggle, has "given himself away," in the declaration, put into the mouth of the Socrates of the dialogue, that after listening to such a patriotic speech, he hardly realizes where he is for several days, so great is the exaltation produced. Plato, we are to understand, thus pays an involuntary tribute to the influence that the Periclean ideals still wield over his reluctant soul, and reveals that he is not yet so bad as he is destined to be, and that he still retains some vestigial traces of the old Socratic holiness. How much less expensive and more valuable would be the obvious alternative, that Socrates is here deriding that false elevation of spirit, so readily awakened in the midst of great public gatherings on solemn occasions, when the orator pours forth his wine of flattering words! The trance thus induced is for Plato one of the unwholesome products of that rhetoric described in the *Gorgias* (464 D) as a subdivision of the art of flattery, which "dangles what is most pleasant for the moment as a bait for folly," and distracts the citizens from the pursuit of civic good. It is not without interest to compare to this ironical handling of the oratorical trance the quite serious words of Alcibiades in the *Symposium* (215 B ff.), confessing the far more powerful effect of listening to the piping of the Marsyas whose name was Socrates. The *Menexenus* as a whole may be read, despite its somewhat scattered manifold of motives, as a contribution to the study of the uses of rhetoric, good and bad, a theme frequent in the dialogues from first to last. Again Popper's attempt "to read between the lines" (which he says is "not at all difficult") evidence of Plato's inner conflict, has only prevented him from seeing clearly the meaning of the lines themselves.

But Popper has still other proofs of Plato's internal struggle, which can "be found in nearly every place where he turns against humanitarian ideas, especially in the *Republic*." These are, in brief, "his evasiveness and his resort to scorn in combating the equalitarian theory of justice, his hesitant preface to his defence of lying, to his introduction of racialism, and to his definition of justice,"²⁷ to each of which Popper has devoted a detailed discussion through which we must follow him.

Before doing so, we must post a warning against an unannounced incon-

²⁷ Popper, p. 192.

sistency in Popper's standpoint. He lists these "evasivenesses" and the rest as traces of the conflict in Plato's soul between the still surviving "better self" and the "Old Oligarch" within him. But when we examine Popper's presentations of the alleged hesitations, we hear only of planned delays, dishonest silences, adroit calculations on the part of one who is concerned only with how best to distract and hoodwink his reader, and it is plain that the struggle, in its original internal sense, is assumed to be wholly at an end. What remains is a very different thing, a struggle against liberal opinions supposedly existing in the souls of others, a battle of propaganda. And as such Popper, without the requisite explanations and qualifications, presents it. Herein is illustrated what we earlier described as Popper's choice of both alternatives to the question of whether he should present Plato as tragically self-deceived or as the cynical and crafty deceiver of others, against whom, to use a Platonic phrase, it is right "to give free course to wrath." As a consequence, we shall be forced into a joint discussion of the two disparate things which Popper has inextricably intertwined.

It will be convenient to examine first the dissection which Popper makes of Plato's manner of introducing his definition of justice, in the fourth book of the *Republic*; for nearly all the supposed earmarks of fraud and equivocation are there detected. The search for justice, toward which this entire section of the *Republic* is directed, is nearing its close; the ideal state has been sketched and outfitted in the process with the basic institutions required for its material and spiritual well-being; two of the four virtues upon which its excellence is presumed to rest have been sufficiently accounted for, i.e., wisdom and courage; temperance and justice remain undefined. And now (430 D) begins what Popper calls the "lengthy preface," which he describes as "an ingenious attempt to prepare the reader for the 'discovery of justice' by making him believe that there is an argument going on when in reality he is only faced with a display of dramatic devices, designed to soothe his critical faculties." The two pages that follow in Popper's text make clear the *modus operandi* of these devices, imputing to Plato a shrewdness and dishonesty worthy of the wily Ulysses. Glaucon, it appears, is Plato's stooge, his function that of going through the motions of keeping careful watch over the "intellectual honesty" with which Socrates conducts the argument, so that "the reader himself, need not . . . watch at all."²⁸ It is he who (on Popper's construction, presently to be denied) prevents Socrates from indulging his avowedly "dishonest" impulse to skip over the definition of temperance. Following a sneerful little paragraph on the definition of temperance, — a definition in which Popper has apparently not been able to find evidence of fraud, but only of Plato's scorn and contempt for the common man, who is to be taught to know his place — we reach the exposé of the major hoax.

²⁸ Popper, p. 98.

In figurative language borrowed from the vocabulary of the chase, Socrates exhorts Glaucon to keep a close watch, for the quarry (that is, justice) is lurking in the covert close by. The lively imagery that follows, — Socrates entering the dark thicket, followed by the helpless Glaucon whom he continues to encourage, the "halloa" of discovery, leading after a teasing final delay, to Socrates' proposal that justice be defined as "to do what is one's own," "to perform one's proper actions," — all this, Popper insists, is merely a distraction, a diversion of "attention from the intellectual poverty of this masterly piece of dialogue."²⁹ In fine, Popper is suggesting that it was the naive reader and not justice that Plato caught.

The cracked stone at the base of Popper's argument is unquestionably the incredible degree of roguery that it imputes to a man whose fundamental honesty was never questioned in his own day by those who, like Aristotle, knew him well. Or are we to suppose that they, too, were members of the conspiracy, and that to a man they kept the secret of Plato's skilful chicanery?³⁰ But

²⁹ Popper, p. 99

³⁰ That Plato was not, among his contemporaries or immediate successors, suspected of duplicity is clearly shown in a study of the personal criticisms directed against him in antiquity, "Hostility to Plato in Antiquity" (typewritten, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Chicago, 1916) by Edwin L. Theiss. Tracing to their probable sources the various gibes and slanders found especially in Athenaeus, and also in Diogenes Laertius, Theiss finds little or no indication of unworthy personal animosity between Plato and such men as Antisthenes, Eudoxus, Aristotle, Xenophon, and Isocrates. Their genuine divergencies in belief, however, involved them in active controversy and competition, and their pupils and successors, members of rival schools, developed these relatively impersonal and decent disagreements into outright calumny and attack. They searched the dialogues in no spirit of equity for passages to be employed against Plato and emerged in triumph with such gems as the charge that Plato slanders Socrates by representing him in the *Symposium* as enamored of Alcibiades, and that in the *Republic* he banishes Homer out of jealousy of his greater literary merit. Theiss groups the personal attacks on Plato as directed against: (1) Plato's character (sexual license, involving both youths and a mistress, love of pleasure, love of praise, unworthy pupils), (2) harsh disposition toward contemporaries including Socrates, fellow Socratics, and some of his own pu-

pils, (3) Sicilian journeys (luxury, lack of tact, flattery, ambition, venality), (4) plagiarism, (5) political inactivity at Athens and impracticality. It is noteworthy that there is here no confirmation of Popper's charges of deceitful propaganda or of conspiratorial relations to Athenian oligarchy. On two points only does Popper appear to have the support of any of the ancients. There is a sentence in *Rhetoric* II, 23, 1398 b, in which Aristotle, illustrating the rhetorical use of an appeal to a recognized authority in support of an argument, reports an appeal made to the authority of Socrates after the latter's death. Plato, as it seemed to Aristippus, had spoken somewhat magisterially, and Aristippus said, "Our friend, at least, would not have said such a thing." This remark may be interpreted in confirmation of Popper's contrast between the modesty of Socrates and the dogmatism of Plato, but since it was spoken by Aristippus, who differed markedly with Plato as to the meaning of Socrates' teaching, and who was known for his cosmopolitan grace and adaptability rather than for zeal and passion, the rebuke must be discounted to an indeterminate degree. The other point of agreement between Popper's case and that of the ancient critics is the animosity reported to have existed between Plato and Antisthenes. Antisthenes directed diatribes against Plato and Plato so it is said, showed to Antisthenes as to other Socratics, arrogance and injustice. Theiss is unwilling to believe Plato guilty, except in so far as

we need not appeal to such general considerations, to the neglect of the specific evidence that lies at hand.

Why, one may ask, has Popper not considered the many places in Plato's writings in which a stretch of argumentation is followed by a passage whose obvious function it is to refresh and to relieve the strain of prolonged attention? Platonic dialogues were not, even for Plato's later period, Aristotelian treatises, still less the prototype of Euclid's *Elements*. One would surely make sad work of their interpretation were he to proceed on the principle that a departure from the strict track of logical continuity is to be regarded as a danger signal that their author is about to perpetrate, either uneasily or with cynical cunning, some deviltry.

Popper's account of the manner in which Socrates leads the reader, in the person of the poor bewildered and impatient Glaucon, about in the wood of his mystification is not without a certain sardonic humor of its own. One would not complain of that, save that it serves as a device (not necessarily conscious) for screening from the reader another form and instance of humor, of whose existence Popper seems not to be aware, namely, Plato's own humor in writing the same passage. One does not need a diagram to see the ludicrous position of Glaucon, stumbling after Socrates in the dark, in helpless dependence upon his ironical guide who insists on treating him as his hunting companion on terms of parity with his knowing self. What Plato has, in fact, created here is not in any serious sense the illusion of an argument, but the reality of a comedy which comes to an appropriately whimsical close with the absurd discovery that the object of their desperate quest all the while lay quietly within their grasp.

In suggesting that Plato has made use of the character of Glaucon in his unscrupulous conspiracy against the intelligence of the reader, Popper has given us a wry version of what is perhaps one element in the truth. It is quite true that Glaucon in several ways helps Plato to carry his reader along with him. But there is nothing sinister or conspiratorial in this. It is, of course, as Chapman long ago reminded us,³¹ one of the most harmless and necessary

he may have been outspoken both orally and in the dialogues in his opposition to Antisthenes' philosophical tenets, and he believes the evidence similarly insufficient to prove unworthy abuse of Plato by Antisthenes; again, the rivalry of the schools, he thinks, provides sufficient explanation. The untrustworthiness of such sources as Diogenes Laertius and Athenaeus is underlined by Theiss' research, which serves to remind us of the many centuries that lie between these writers and the period of Plato's and Antisthenes' lives, and provides abundant evidence of the animosities and irresponsible attitude to facts which had

already corrupted their sources. It should be noted that Theiss has limited his inquiry to the literature of Platonic detraction and has excluded from his report the counter-exaggerations of the adulators who devised the apocryphal tales of swans and of bees that prophetically announced Plato's glory to the world. Had it not been for the accident that Athenaeus has been preserved, while writings correspondingly biased in Plato's favor have been lost, we might know more than we do of the facts and fancies favorable to Plato.

³¹ See pp. 28-29.

he has availed himself of the vivid and sustained metaphor of the three waves of objection and ridicule with which, he anticipates, his proposals will be met. And it is interesting to note that this metaphor permits him to throw the greatest emphasis upon that one of the three whose significance he regarded as paramount, namely, the rule of the philosopher kings, since the "third wave" was, in Greek popular belief, the greatest. Again, in Book IX, to mark the formal completion of the proof that justice is *per se* the highly preferable alternative to injustice — the *probandum* of the entire *Republic* — he makes the fanciful suggestion (which Grote, construing it with undue literalness, rebukes as immodest on Plato's part) that "we hire a herald," or let Socrates "proclaim that the son of Ariston has adjudged that man the happiest who is most just" (*Republic* 580 B). Such ceremonies take time, time enough to account for what Popper calls a "lengthy preface." But there is nothing dark and devious about them which elaborate hypotheses are required to explain.

Closely tied to the attack upon Plato's diversion of attention is the critique of the three arguments on which the Platonic theory of justice is made, at this point in the dialogue, to rest. Two of the three are conceived by Popper as part and parcel of the attempt to distract, the hems and haws and "look yonders" of a man furtively awaiting the safe moment for introducing, at last, a "straightforward and consistent" plea for the "collective clockwork" of totalitarian justice, "in all its barrenness."³³ Popper expresses his (ironical) reluctance to consider the first of these an argument at all, and in this expression, apart from its intention, we can find something substantial with which to agree. The so-called "argument" is the statement (*Republic* 427 E, 433 C) that if three of the supposed four virtues, wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice, have been accounted for and justice has not yet been found, then whatever virtue is further discovered must be justice itself. (As we shall presently see, there is here present the tacit assumption that each of the four virtues must be a basic and vital condition to the excellence of the city.)

Now clearly there is present in this form of inquiry something of definite logical interest, the germ, at least, of what Mill formulated as the method of Residues.³⁴ But quite as clearly, Plato is not leaning any substantial weight upon it as a validation of his result, is not, in short, using it as an argument in the full sense. It is employed rather as an expository device to indicate the path that the mind of Socrates may be supposed to follow in bringing him to a "conclusion," which conclusion is, however, not regarded as demonstrated but rather as brought clearly into view, as recommended, for that closer inspection which it presently receives. Plato makes it clear (433 C-E) that to be judged acceptable as the missing member of his tetradic scheme,

³³ Popper p. 107

³⁴ In so saying I may still with Shorey (note on *Republic* 427 E Loeb Library) deplore as "pedantry" the attempt to dis-

cover in Plato Mill's celebrated canon. Plato is not trying to analyze the methods of induction, but merely to direct and to expound a particular train of thought.

the proposed virtue must show itself of equal if not superior importance to the three virtues already identified; there is implied also the requirement that it must characterize the city as a whole and every group of its inhabitants³⁵ It is next subjected to the test of the two succeeding arguments listed in Popper's complaint We are then told (434 D ff) that this proffered conception of justice, if it is at last to be approved, must show its adequacy to describe the corresponding excellence of the individual And before the final acceptance is pronounced, it has been shown (442 E ff) clearly to exclude the ordinary civil crimes and iniquities of theft, adultery, and bad faith It thus appears that the seemingly odd but actually not uncommon mixture of psychology and logic, of heuristic and proof by which Plato has arrived at what may be called a likely hypothesis — for as such his proposed definition truly functions — justifies some hesitation over the classifications of the form of reasoning involved But it is only the imputation of bad faith to Plato's procedure that has permitted Popper to treat it with cynical contempt

Plato's second argument receives even rougher handling, Plato is detected in the attempt to derive his "antigualitarianism" from the "egalitarian view that justice is impartiality", his argument "is nothing but a crude jug gle," whose "sole purpose" is the illegitimate attempt to show "that justice, in the ordinary sense of the word, requires us to keep our own station," i e, "our own" class," forever "This is how the greatest philosopher of all times tries to convince us that he has discovered the true nature of justice"³⁶

What Plato has actually done is to point out that it is possible to confirm his suggested definition of justice by observing that judges in the courts of his city will seek in giving judgment to render to each his own, "both the having and the doing of what is properly his" (*Republic* 433 E), that is, we may interpret, to restore the balance that has been disturbed by crime, by assigning repayments or penalties, or by restoring status to those unjustly accused Plato is showing that the suggested formula can be extended to include the justice of the courts, something that a definition of justice would naturally be expected to do We are reminded of the meaning of justice which is employed in the *Gorgias* (464 B, 478 A-D), where justice (*dikē* and *dikaosynē*, interchangeably) is made the correlative of medicine, as legislation is that of the trainer's art, and as the trainer and the legislator minister to healthy souls and bodies respectively, the physician and the judge minister to and assign the remedies to those that are sick or in need of healing punishment To call the judgments given by the just judge, the assignment to each of "having and doing his own," is fully in accord with this point of view, and Plato's second proof is seen as not without weight, in terms of his thought

³⁵ We recollect from the *Protagoras* (322 D-323 C) that reverence and justice *aidos* and *dike*, are required of all members of any human community, and are not, like

flute playing excellences to be dispensed with by any man

³⁶ Popper, pp 96-97

as a whole. We shall agree with Popper that its intention here in the *Republic* is to lend strength to the suggested formula for justice. But since we shall not agree that this formula amounts to the assertion that in the actual world, as distinct from the ideal city, everyone must keep forever his "own station," we deny the truth of Popper's further remarks concerning the "sole purpose" of this argument.

Plato's third argument is the assertion that it would be harmful in the highest degree to the ideal city, and therefore correspondingly unjust, for a member of one of the three functional classes to intrude into a class whose duties his natural capacities do not qualify him to perform; that it is just, therefore, for him to do his proper task; and that thus again the formula for justice is sustained. It is in this third argument, Popper believes, that Plato, putting off all disguises, confronts us with a serious appeal to the principle of collectivism, and to its discrediting Popper accordingly devotes much space. The issues raised reach the very center of Plato's moral and political thought, the theme of our discussion in a later chapter. But a few comments are indispensable in the present context.

For the success of Popper's interpretation of what Plato has been concealing and revealing in this fourth book of the *Republic*, it is, of course, essential that the revelation, when it comes, shall possess the proportions of a mountain, not a mouse. To secure this result, Popper has done all that was humanly possible to enlarge and underline what is unacceptable in the concept of Platonic justice. To this end, he has done two things that must not be allowed to pass unchallenged.

Popper asserts that in this argument, "Plato recognizes only one ultimate standard, the interest of the state." In thus unwarrantably narrowing Platonic justice, restricting it to the service of the state's interest, Popper has given a specious color to his declaration of the "barrenness" of the concept. But this is, as Berkeley puts it, "to raise a dust and complain we cannot see." The advocate of any form of civil organization whatever, not totalitarians alone, must regard it as part of injustice to undermine the stability of his approved form, part of justice (and an important part) to maintain it. And Plato, as we have seen, extends his concept of justice to include legal justice, and is on his way to test his definition against the demands of the psychology and ethics and social behavior of the individual, both within and without the ideal state. Plato, in calling it "just" to do what serves the interest of the city, is stating no more than that this is part of justice; and Popper has no warrant for treating Plato's statement as a definition of the whole.³⁷ To put this in another

"To be listed as part of this same error is Popper's further statement (p. 104) that in Plato's city "it is simply nonsense" to say "that it is better to suffer than to commit injustice," because injustice is an act

against the state and nothing more, and therefore an individual cannot "suffer" an injustice. A man can be injured or cheated in Plato's state, just as he could be put to death in the Athens described in the *Gor-*

way, Popper has no right to interpret Plato's statement as the assertion that the interest of the state is by nature, essence, and definition equal to Platonic justice. To do so is to avenge Thrasymachus upon Plato, by re-erecting his overthrown thesis, "justice is the advantage of the stronger," and making it serve as the corner stone of Plato's temple.³⁸ The reasoning which has engendered this conclusion involves an arbitrary identification of "property" and "essence," in which, despite his efforts to avoid it, Popper has involved himself throughout his discussion of Plato's political thinking.³⁹ This is particularly easy to do because for Plato "advantage" (e.g., happiness, beauty, stability) in the normal case attends upon moral excellence. But this is not to say that moral excellence is only for these reasons to be sought. That so gifted a logician as Popper should be chargeable with neglecting so gross a distinction is a commentary upon the dyslogistic power of partisanship. It is not true, as Popper supposes, that the eye of hate sees clearest.⁴⁰

Secondly, we cannot allow Popper to distract his readers into transferring to the justice which Plato has proposed the indignation naturally aroused by applying the Platonic formula, in its political aspect, to an unreformed city, such as Athens or Megara, with the result of freezing in perpetuity all existing inequalities of ownership and status. Plato's political justice, of course, has its only proper home and application in a city shaped and molded initially by conformity to its canon, namely, the principle that each should really be where he belongs, in view of his capacity, and have what he requires, in view of his needs and contribution to the common life. It was in fact largely for

gias, and he will in either case "suffer in justice," but only in the terms of Socrates' paradox, since his soul is unimpaired, he will suffer no real injury. Alternatively, in the *Republic*, the man who commits in justice harms both the state and his own soul by disturbing their respective internal orders, and is truly worse off than he to whom injustice has been done (*Rep* 366-7).

³⁸ Oddly enough, Woodbridge maintained (*The Son of Apollo*, 1929, pp. 90-91) in a whimsical sense, that Plato has actually done this very thing—though with no disposition to abolish the distinction between might and right.

³⁹ Elsewhere in his book (e.g., pp. 72-73), Popper has shown himself well aware that Plato's ethics are rooted not in political but in metaphysical soil or, in other words, that Plato is what Popper calls a "spiritual naturalist," whose ethics rests upon a normative theory of man. True that Popper has, in a sense, anticipated this objection, and argued (pp. 76-81) that though Plato appeals to the norm of human

nature, that norm was itself political in view of the insufficiency of the individual man. This has merely shifted the incidence of the fallacy, for it by no means follows that the economic and political organization of individuals into a state has displaced moral control, has set up its own peculiar norm free from moral responsibility. On the contrary, as the account of the education of the philosophic rulers in *Republic* Book VII shows at length, and as Plato states succinctly at *Laws* 645 B, quoted on p. 520 below, the state must hunt and find a moral principle for its guidance, namely, justice, which cannot be defined in less than cosmic terms.

⁴⁰ "Plato hated tyranny. Only hatred can see as sharply as he did in his famous description of the tyrant" (Popper, p. 193). In an earlier passage, it is true, Popper had implied (see n. 115, p. 78 above) that he tried even of tyranny is somehow *desirable*. But he himself professes "frank hostility" (p. 36) to "historicism," and therefore to Plato's political thought.

the sake of formulating this ideal and drawing out its full implication for the life of man that Plato wrote the *Republic*. Plato's sense of the organic relation between his definition and its contemplated sphere of application is shown by his practice in subsequent dialogues, e.g., in the *Laws*, where without altering anything in his fundamental value scheme, Plato assigns to justice a meaning better fitted to take account of changed relations of the citizens to each other and to the common weal.⁴¹

Plato has also, in clearing the way for his totalitarian scheme, been guilty in Popper's eyes of another crime, that of ignoring what he could not hope successfully to combat. Thus, in the *Republic*, while appearing to omit from consideration "none of the more important theories" of justice "known to him," he fails even to mention the view "that justice is equality before the law" (*isonomia*). That this omission is tactical and no mere consequence of ignorance, Popper infers with certainty from allusions to the theory in the *Gorgias*, where, he asserts, Socrates defends it, and also from the "few sneers and pin-pricks" it receives in a part of the *Republic* "where justice is not the topic of the discussion." This "almost unbroken silence" is a part of Plato's attack, conducted "not squarely and openly," against his "arch-enemy," equalitarianism.⁴²

In all this we think it fair to say there is no single element which supports the conclusion in favor of which it is adduced; it is more nearly true that the destined conclusion has forced the selection and interpretation of the "facts." Let us then see whether what Plato has done in the *Republic* can be *more easily explained without the violence of assuming Plato's bad faith*. The *Republic* begins and ends with a concern for the individual soul, and in the conviction that its present and future well-being depend upon its "justice," i.e., its righteousness during its mortal career. The aged Cephalus introduces this theme at the beginning of Book I (330 D ff.) and expounds it in the language of traditional Greek religion; Socrates reaffirms it at the end of the final book: "If we are guided by me . . . we shall pursue justice with wisdom always and ever, that we may be dear to ourselves and to the gods . . . and thus . . . we shall fare well."⁴³ In the interval, it is true to say Plato has evaluated every important theory of justice known to him, including the current "equalitarianism" associated with Periclean and post-Periclean democ-

⁴¹ In the *Laws* the ideal of political justice is not indeed essentially different from political justice in the *Republic* (or for that matter, in the *Gorgias*): it is defined (757 C) as the principle of assigning political offices and honors in proportion to a man's moral and intellectual worth. But Plato reluctantly tempers this ideal in practice, to meet the circumstances im-

posed by a "second-best" state, with the result that the measure of civic worth becomes the spirit of obedience to the existing laws, and the incitement of others to a like attitude (715 B-D, 730 D).

⁴² Popper, pp. 92-96; p. 116.

⁴³ Trans. Shorey (slightly altered), Loeb Library.

racy, but he does so in an order chosen by himself. In Book I, he passes rapidly over the inadequacies of various traditional notions of what right conduct is—paying one's debts, benefiting friends and injuring enemies, etc (331 C ff). The standpoint here is still that of the individual man. With Thrasymachus' definition (338 C), we enter upon considerations involving political as distinct from moral questions, but, as is indicated by the manner in which the proffered definition is handled, the basic question (e.g., 343 C ff, 348 B ff) remains the same: what does it profit a man to possess this quality rather than its contrary? This becomes especially clear in Book II, after Thrasymachus has been overthrown, when Glaucon and Adeimantus restate his case with supplementary reinforcement, for Socrates to refute in its fullest possible strength. What is called for, therefore, at this point of the argument, is just what Plato has provided: the most persuasive of current arguments known to him, purporting to show that a man is a victim of his own naivete if he permits his interest to be interfered with by moral and religious principles.

It is thus true that Plato has not put into the earlier part of his *Republic* what Popper supposes he was under obligation to put there, the discussion of the organizing principles of various forms of political constitutions, e.g., democracy, with its principle of "equality before the law." Why Plato should have followed Popper's order in the construction of his book one fails to see. What is clear, however, is that in Book VIII, after the lineaments of his ideal state have been clearly drawn, Plato does offer a discussion of the types of government and an appraisal of the degree of human excellence and social fairness attainable in each. Certainly he makes clear his judgment that the contemporary democracy, despite its advocacy of equality, was very unequal and unfair in its actual distribution of rights and benefits. Popper has belittled Plato's treatment of democracy here "in view of the satiric tone that pervades it." But for reasons we have earlier expounded, Plato was not in a position to sing the praises of democracy. The only relevant question concerns not appreciation but honesty, and though one may well doubt that Plato's satire does full justice to the case for Athenian democracy, it is certainly an honest and unabashed attack, from a clearly indicated base, upon the principle of equality regarded as the essence of political justice.

The construction of the ideal state begun in Book II is undertaken by Socrates as a means of clarifying the nature and function of justice. Doubtless this shows that Plato was interested not merely in the moral problem as it confronts the individual, but in the political question as well, it is no

"Popper in another passage pp. 43-45 does not belittle but emphasizes and exaggerates (as we have seen in 228 p. 310) Plato's scornful description of democracy calling it 'a flood of rhetorical abuse'."

"identifying liberty with licence and equality before the law with disorder." In charging "almost universal silence" on this topic therefore Popper seems to have overlooked his own earlier assertions.

mere afterthought. Doubtless, also, the moral and the political aspects of the ideal state are, for Plato, not to be torn apart. Within their indissoluble unity, however, this much of duality may be discerned: the political institutions are for the sake of the moral life of the citizens, and not — Popper's capital error — conversely. And since it is recognized that this moral striving can be carried on, at least by gifted individuals, without the support of a well-ordered state, political justice, for Plato, cannot absorb without remainder the totality of justice. We may remind ourselves again of the just man in the evil state, who stands aside from political affairs, like one who takes shelter behind a wall in a storm.⁴⁵ It is scarcely necessary to insist that the *sine qua non* of the existence of this man is the separability of ethics and politics, and that unless there is a meaning of justice stateable independently, he could not be described as just. In view of this requirement, it would not have been possible for Plato to pursue his search for a comprehensive definition of justice among definitions of political or juridical justice, such as *isonomia*. His failure formally to consider its claims needs, therefore, no further explanation.

The sole remaining support of Popper's belief that Plato dishonestly refrains in the *Republic* from giving due consideration to equality as justice, is his reputed discovery (other critics are said to have "overlooked" the fact) that in the *Gorgias* Plato had shown Socrates defending this very theory, for which, in the later parts of the *Republic*, he is made to express his scorn. On quieter inspection, this will be seen to involve a misreading of a passage (*Gorgias* 488 B ff., esp. 488 E–489 A) in which Socrates makes a purely dialectical use, against Callicles, of the notions that equality is just, and that injustice is shameful, as opinions admittedly approved by the many. Socrates does not here state to what degree he himself is in accord with them; he merely proves that since the many are collectively the stronger, these opinions will, on Callicles' own premises, constitute natural justice. When, later in the *Gorgias*, Socrates comes to grips with his theme, his standpoint is in no respect at variance with that of the *Republic* or later dialogues: the equality that he defends is proportional or "geometrical," not of the simple "arithmetical" variety, beloved of Athenian democrats.⁴⁶

We have also to consider the weight of another of Popper's imputations

⁴⁵ More extreme instances of this lack of dependence between individual moral attainment and the interest of the state are mentioned by Plato in the passage from the *Laws* (770 C–D) quoted on pp. 520–521. On p. 643 we discuss also Plato's conception of the relation between individual moral attainment and the state as a moral and educational influence.

⁴⁶ The real basis of our statement here is not the passing mention of "geometrical equality" (508 A), for all the importance

which Plato assigns to it elsewhere (e.g., *Rep.* 558 C, *Laws* 757 A–D). That basis is, rather, to be assembled from the dialogue as a whole, particularly those passages in which Socrates compares the statesman's art to that of the public trainer or physician of souls (e.g., 513 E–515 A, 502 E–505 B), combined with the further conception of the physician as the man who knows how to apportion to each his appropriate kind and amount of nourishment or medicine (e.g., 490 B–C, 464 B–C).

of underhanded practices, this time the important charge that Plato had no right, and knew he had none, to apply the term "justice" to his theory of the proper principle of social organization and its application to the individual. To Popper this is no mere question of verbal propriety. Plato was, it is granted, sincere in his opposition to humanitarian forces; but he is declared unscrupulous in his choice of means. Not daring "to face the enemy openly," he sought to capture the strong and admirable existing sentiment in behalf of the good thing which was equalitarian justice, and enlist it in behalf of "totalitarian class rule," by a dishonest verbal trick, in short, by a use of the Pareto principle.⁴⁷

Nothing could be more plausible than this suggestion, with the one proviso that Plato may be antecedently defined as "a reptile capable of discourse." For why should Plato be denied the right to apply to the outcome of his efforts to clarify and purify what was to him the most approvable plan and purpose of human life, individual and social, the name of justice? Nor is this simply a matter of sentimental right. There is a principle of logical and general philosophical importance at stake, easily to be illustrated at every stage of the growth of human enquiry. We may call it by the somewhat high-sounding name of "the right of conceptual reëssentialization," and illustrate its use by pointing to the semantics of such words in the scientific vocabulary as "sugar" and "angle," in which the attainment of new heights of generalization has involved doing a radical violence to their traditional, commonsense meanings, denying that sugar is sweet, and speaking of angles greater than 360°. We may even claim the founder of Christianity as a practitioner of this art: witness his "reëssentialization" of such terms as "my neighbor"; while in contemporary political discussion, "world citizenship" is an instance of the same process in mid-career.

Returning to Plato, in the light of what has just been said we can read a reply to Popper: by including in his wider formula for justice the traditional juristic meaning of the concept, Plato was not making an insidious attempt to capture popular affection. In just the same way, as we have shown, he has included other popular acceptations of the term which Popper has not noticed (*Republic* 442 f.), e.g., the observing of oaths, abstention from thefts and betrayals, respect for parents. He has provided for the inclusion of the solitary conscientious objector, and for the description of the state as a whole, both in its internal ordering and in its international conduct; he has accounted, with some modification, for the justice of the common citizens in his ideal state, as well as for that of the rulers. In all these ways Plato is "reëssentializing"; he is effecting junctures between new and old that enrich both terms of the relation. The conventional ideal is deepened and extended by being caught up into a wider pattern of systematic totality; at the same time the

⁴⁷ Popper, p. 92.

philosophical ideal gains in solidity of relevant content. There has been no juggle, no wrenching of context, only the sort of clarified enlargement of significance that always results when philosophy discovers a more comprehensive category for the coherent ordering of the miscellanies of human experience. Whether Plato's ideal is in all its applications acceptable to the modern reader is another question; but there can be no doubt that the effort to construct it constitutes a legitimate and even noble attempt, in line with a progressive method of inquiry.

We have witnessed the insufficiency and failure of Popper's suspicions of bad faith in Plato's way of introducing and defining justice in the *Republic* and have traced them to their respective foundations in Popper's deliberate blindness to literary considerations, his neglect of the logical distinction between definition and description, his misreading of a Platonic passage in the *Gorgias*, and above all, his inflexible and unimaginative requirement that Plato shall arrange his topics, employ his terms, and conduct his discussion along lines predetermined for him by Popper. In so doing we have illustrated the general arbitrariness and the busy inventiveness of Popper's method, and we have thus, it is hoped, established the probability that Popper's other imputations of guile to Plato could be shown to be similarly baseless, were it possible to examine them all in equal detail. This we do not intend to do; yet there are still some of these which merit attention.

Popper maintains that Plato has knowingly misrepresented and has thus caused to be misunderstood and undervalued a noble theory of the proper function of government, conceived by Plato's near-contemporary, the sophist Lycophron, whom we recall as an admired member of Popper's Great Generation and a supposed but unverified opponent of slavery; we have also seen⁴⁸ that he was in fact the author of a denunciation, preserved by Aristotle, of the claims of noble birth, and of one other relevant fragment dealing with the proper end or aim of the state and embedded in Aristotle's discussion of this topic. It is this latter with which we are here centrally concerned. Aristotle is occupied at this point in his *Politics*⁴⁹ in rejecting the view that a state can be constituted by an association of individuals or households bound together only by agreements, like trade treaties and nonaggression pacts between states, which regulate the exchange of goods and prohibit mutual aggression. To him it appears that the only association worthy the name of state is one which includes among its aims the promotion of virtue in its citizens. In the midst of his argument, he quotes, in order to deny it his approval, the saying of "the sophist Lycophron," that "law is the guarantor of just mutual dealing, but is unable to make the citizens good and just."

⁴⁸ See pp. 146-147 above.

⁴⁹ *Politics* III, ix, 6 ff.

It is well to remember that these two fragments and their Aristotelian contexts constitute our entire basis for judging Lycophron's political thought. Popper himself has declared, "Any opinion of Lycophron must be highly speculative, owing to the scanty information we have", ⁵⁰ yet he has not hesitated to speculate boldly upon the two fragments, and on Lycophron's behalf has announced the claim that he was the first proponent of "the protectionist theory of the state" ⁵¹

This theory, which Popper regards as even today the only valid justification of government, does not attempt, we are told, to answer the question, "How did the state originate?" — a question which Popper regards as fatally "historicist" — or the "essentialist" question, "What is the state?" but only, "What do we demand from a state?" It appears to assume the existence of a group of persons who regard themselves as associated upon equal terms for the purpose of attaining rational ends. Each of its members, in so far as he is a "humanitarian," is conceived as saying, "What I demand from the state is protection, not only for myself, but for others too. I demand protection for my own freedom and for other people's against aggression from other men. I know that some limitations of my freedom are necessary. But I demand protection of that freedom which does not harm other citizens" ⁵² It is a further essential part of Popper's conception of the protectionist state that it shall not concern itself with, or attempt to control the morality of its members, such an attempt on his view would necessarily "destroy morality," and replace it with "the totalitarian irresponsibility of the individual" ⁵³ It is this protectionist view of the state, equalitarian, individualist, and altruistic, which Popper finds to have been Lycophron's great discovery, and of which "we have been robbed" by Plato's dishonest misrepresentation ⁵⁴

That Plato knew the theory well, Popper concludes from a passage in the *Gorgias* (483 B ff.), in which Callicles, who believes that natural justice is "that the strong should rule and have more," is made to speak scornfully of the usual laws and customs which decree that no man shall get the better of his neighbor and that it is unjust and disgraceful to attempt it, for, Callicles declares, the weak men, who are in the majority, make these laws in their own interest in order to deter the strong, and "are well content to see themselves on an equality, when they are so inferior" ⁵⁵ Popper supposes (a) that Callicles is here opposing (without naming) Lycophron, quipping and criticizing his equalitarian doctrine of protectionism, (b) that the Socrates of the dialogue, merely by opposing Callicles, by implication "comes to the rescue of

⁵⁰ Popper p. 541

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 112

⁵² Popper pp. 108-109

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-113

⁵⁵ *Gorgias* 483 C, trans. Lamb. Loeb Library

protectionism"; and (c) that Socrates' subsequent use of Callicles' own premises to disprove Callicles' doctrine of natural justice,⁵⁶ constitutes the explicit defense, by Socrates himself, of several elements in protectionism. Thus Popper believes he has presented proof at once of the nobility of the true Socrates as contrasted with the counterfeit "Socrates" of the *Republic*, and of Plato's knowledge of Lycophron's protectionist doctrine in its equalitarian and unselfish form.⁵⁷

Turning now to the *Republic*, in the speech of Glaucon (358 E ff.) Popper finds a second but seriously altered sketch of protectionism. Here Glaucon is maintaining, for the sake of the argument, the thesis that injustice is advantageous to its possessor, and in presenting his case he is made to expound the views of some persons who say that justice itself is of no lofty origin or nature. Best of all things, they say, is the doing of injustice to others with impunity; and this in the beginning all men sought to obtain. But the majority, being weak, had no success, and in consequence banded together to relinquish by a social compact the most desirable thing in order to secure for themselves the second-best thing, which is immunity from being wronged at the cost of doing no wrong; and this they call justice. In Popper's opinion, Plato has here, as also in the *Gorgias*, given the theory of protectionism a "fatal historicist presentation." But in another respect, his treatment of it in the *Republic* reveals "a tremendous difference," for whereas in the *Gorgias* Socrates defends protectionism, in this later dialogue he has dishonestly, but with "astonishing success" and cleverness, made it to appear identical with cynical nihilism, to the disadvantage of Lycophron's fair fame and to the lasting hurt of the humanitarian cause in general.⁵⁸

We are now ready to appraise the degree of credence which Popper's argument deserves; and a second look discloses that it rests principally upon one base, that is, the altruism and other ethical excellences which, Popper assumes, originally were inherent in Lycophron's doctrine, distinguishing it from the ignoble form presented by Glaucon in the *Republic*. And Popper has further assumed that in its original form there was no talk of origins, nor any suggestion of a historical social compact. Without these assumptions it would be impossible to prove anything to Plato's discredit in this whole matter; for then the difference between the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* (if such there be) loses all significance. Since this is so, we must examine closely the evidence on which Popper's high claim is based.

We are thrown back upon that passage from Aristotle's *Politics* in which the sentence from Lycophron occurs. As has been said, the general theme is the separation of the state, properly so-called, from other associations with which it may be confused, among them limited associations resembling

⁵⁶ We have discussed this argument above, p. 416.

⁵⁷ Popper, pp. 114-116.

⁵⁸ Popper, pp. 116-117.

treaties between nations. Aristotle is not discussing the motivation of the nations which enter into such treaties, or of the persons who may be imagined to do the same. He implies nothing, either favorable or unfavorable, concerning the reasons for which Lycophron's "guarantor of just mutual dealings" exists. It is perfectly compatible with Aristotle's presentation to believe that Lycophron, in describing his social compact, had taught that it was maintained by its members not out of a desire to protect others, but out of the purely prudential desire of each man to secure his own personal safety and profit. Nor does Aristotle go into sufficient detail to enable us to see the reason why Lycophron denied the state's fitness "to make the citizens good and just." To speculate upon this is not very profitable, but we may at least observe that there is no foundation in Aristotle's text for Popper's implication that Lycophron must have denied on principle the propriety of the state's intrusion into the domain of individual responsibility.⁵⁹ And once this supposition is eliminated, Popper's claim that Lycophron's theory was "individualist" loses all foundation. Whether Lycophron depicted the social compact as a historical event is similarly undiscoverable. Aristotle, it is true, presents it as part of his own discussion of the aim or purpose of the state, without reference to origins. But he would be perfectly within his rights in referring to a doctrine which had spoken of the purpose for which law was originally established, as a doctrine regarding the purpose or nature of law.⁶⁰ Nor can it be assumed that Lycophron's law guaranteed equality among the citizens. There is certainly no mention of equality, nor any implication of it in Aristotle's context: treaties between nations are by no means always concluded on an equal basis. And depending on what is regarded as "just," a social compact could pledge its members to maintain inviolate any inequalities of status, rights, or possessions. True that Lycophron is on record as having denied the claims of noble birth, but we do not know his attitude toward other inequalities, e.g., the claims of wealth. The characteristics for which Popper so highly honors Lycophron are thus not attested by Aristotle.

⁵⁹ Other possible reasons for denying the state's fitness to produce virtue in the citizens lie near at hand. Lycophron may have maintained what was almost a postulate of the sophist's trade, that training by a qualified sophist was requisite. He may have believed that it would be highly desirable for the state to inculcate virtue, but that it was unfortunately impossible, since, as Antiphon observed in a passage adjoining the one quoted on our p. 145 above (Diels, II, pp. xxxiv-xxxv, fr. A, col. 6), legal penalties for crime come late and are uncertain; as Diodotus (Thucydides III, 45) had also observed, threats of punishment for crime have never constituted effective

deterrents. He may have agreed with the sentiment expressed in the play of *Critias* (who had also, apparently, been a pupil of Gorgias) that religious sanctions were indispensable (see pp. 272-273 above).

⁶⁰ If Lycophron had said, "The state originated when men established law as the guarantor of just mutual dealings," Aristotle could still have quoted him as he does. Popper, p. 111, says that conventionalists, wishing to describe the state in terms of a demand, often clumsily speak of its origin or its essence. It could be concluded from this that unless there is particular reason for precision, a given expositor may employ these concepts interchangeably.

Nor can the *Gorgias* be pressed into service to establish the original excellence of Lycophron's theory. Callicles' version of the social contract theory is indeed very different from what Aristotle tells us of Lycophron's. There seems in fact to be no similarity except that both involve a compact. In Callicles' version there is no mention of the state's unfitness to produce virtue, and thus at a blow half of what was known of Lycophron's is eliminated. In Lycophron's version, so far as can be judged, all citizens unite to establish law; in Callicles', it is the weak alone who do so, in opposition to the strong. In Lycophron's version, equality is left unmentioned; in Callicles', it is prominent, though cynically regarded as the self-interest of the weak. The *Gorgias* contains further important additions. There is the supposition throughout that all men aim simply at power and wealth, and there is the cynical identification of conventional justice with the selfish interest and the moralistic pretense of the weaker men. The theory has been altered and has grown so much that it cannot properly be called the same; it is either Callicles' own (if he is a real person), or that of some other man; Antiphon the sophist has been suggested as a likely candidate.⁶¹ It has indeed become ethically equivalent to that presented in the *Republic*.

Popper, brushing aside all these new and cynical elements as simply Callicles' misrepresentation of a noble theory, still sees at its core what he imagines to be the altruistic, equalitarian doctrine of Lycophron. He assumes that in so far as Callicles speaks of law as a compact between the many weak men who ordain that equality is just and brand injustice as foul and disgraceful, he is simply restating Lycophron's view; yet there is no evidence, as we have seen, that Lycophron ever thought in these terms. Popper then adds, as before, the assumption that Lycophron had imputed generous motives and individualist scruples to those who establish law, and behold! "protectionism" is before us. Yet there is not in the *Gorgias*, any more than in Aristotle, any indication that Lycophron, or indeed anyone in Plato's Athens, had ever ascribed such other-regarding motives to the participants in a social compact.⁶² Callicles does not say of the weaker men, even in scornful derision, that they refuse to intrude on the field of private morality, or that they desire justice, each man for his neighbor as well as for himself, because they do not wish anyone at all to suffer wrong.

Nor does the Socrates of the dialogue, simply by the fact that he opposes Callicles, imply the existence of a noble compact theory which he defends.⁶³

⁶¹ See our discussion of Antiphon, p. 144f.

⁶² Plato's own version of the social compact (*Rep.* 369 B ff.), while it rests upon the assumed self-interest of the participants, is at least free from any suggestion of a desire to overreach, and is as amicable a theory as that that has come down to us from that period.

⁶³ Popper's thesis that there is "a tremendous difference," hitherto overlooked by the commentators, between the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* in the attitude adopted toward the "protectionist theory," is difficult either to state clearly or to refute because of the complications resulting from the quotation, by one speaker, of another's be-

Popper, as we have seen throughout our acquaintance with him, too easily assumes that there are only two positions possible, and that a man who denies one must support the other; he overlooks the existence of positions which combine elements of both, or contain elements foreign to either. Socrates, as we have seen, does later in the *Gorgias* take a stand which differs both from the equalitarian theory of the state and from Callicles' doctrine of self-interest. As to Popper's demonstration that Socrates "upholds . . . several features" of the compact theory which Callicles unfairly misrepresents, we may say first that Socrates-Plato, in every dialogue in which the question is directly raised, believes that to do injustice is fouler than to suffer it,⁶⁴ which is one of the features referred to; and for the rest, it is simply not true that Socrates upholds what Callicles denies: we have shown that Popper's proof of this rests upon his failure to observe the dialectical nature of Socrates' initial refutation of Callicles.⁶⁵

The form of the compact theory of justice which appears in the *Republic* is, as we have said, closely akin to that in the *Gorgias*, and is presented by Plato as thoroughly unacceptable, its affiliation with the doctrine that self-interest is the only determiner of human action brought strongly to the fore. We remember that for Popper this fact is the damning proof that Plato has dishonestly misrepresented Lycophron. But where is Lycophron's altruistic theory presented to our view? We have sought for it in vain in Aristotle; it has not been found in the *Gorgias*. There is simply nothing for Plato to have misrepresented. Instead, there is every likelihood that Plato was only too well acquainted with the existence in Athens of a nihilistic version of the compact theory, developed by some person or persons whose names he refrains on principle from recording. Plato has chosen in his *Republic* to present this dangerous doctrine, which could be used to convince young men like Glaucon

hief, nevertheless, that it rests on a confusion can be shown, if sufficient patience is exerted. Popper says, in brief (p. 115), that in the *Gorgias*, Lycophron's theory is presented by Callicles as one which he opposes; Socrates opposes Callicles and thus *ipso facto* supports Lycophron. Popper next states that in the *Republic* Lycophron's theory is presented by Glaucon as an elaboration of Thrasymachus' nihilism; Socrates opposes this Thrasymachean nihilism, and thus opposes Lycophron's theory. The confusion here apparently arises from the word "presents." In the *Gorgias*, Callicles does not present Lycophron's theory, even if we accept Popper's belief that Lycophron had enunciated a noble compact theory which Callicles is opposing. Let us assume, with Popper, that Lycophron did so announce it,

and let us then attempt to restate what Callicles, and Glaucon, do with Lycophron's noble theory. Callicles announces as his own an immoralist theory of the social compact in which Popper sees embedded elements of Lycophron's theory. Glaucon too sets forth a nihilistic theory of the social compact in which Popper sees embedded elements of Lycophron's theory. Thus in both dialogues, Lycophron's theory appears only in combination with immoralist or nihilist elements. In both dialogues, it is thus identically related to Socrates, in that he refutes the nihilistic doctrine with which it is combined.

⁶⁴ Cf. our pp. 412-413 and notes, and for a corollary principle, p. 439.

⁶⁵ See p. 416 above.

that to be unjust with impunity was the "smart" thing to do, as a prelude to his attempt to set forth a more persuasive ideal of self-realization combined with altruistic concern for social well-being. That he had every right to do so, without being accused of misrepresenting or intending to deceive anyone, seems obvious.

We see, then, that with Lycophron, as with Antisthenes and Socrates, Popper has built up an ancient thinker by the simple process of making all modern and creditable additions to his doctrines which do not conflict with his recorded sayings, or which can be added, as he has done for Socrates and Antisthenes, by ignoring some of these. Having built up this thinker with the utmost generosity, he then not only contrasts Plato with him, to Plato's disadvantage, but also ascribes to Plato misrepresentation or vilification of his noble opponent. The charge that in dealing with Lycophron Plato has robbed us of a valuable ethical insight is seen to be particularly baseless, since there remains of Lycophron only enough to establish him as the proponent of some form of the compact theory of the state, whether altruistic, or in all respects equalitarian, or individualist, or nonhistorical, we cannot say. This being the case, Plato's reputation for honesty can suffer no harm.

The "myth of the metals" in the fourth book of the *Republic*, which Popper calls a "propaganda lie," and to which he has affixed the name of the "Myth of Blood and Soil," has provided another opportunity to press the charges of duplicity and guilty hesitation. Again Plato is seen trembling before the anticipated indignation of his libertarian Athenian reader and, in the hope of deluding him, practicing sleights and turns of rhetoric. Yet Popper in his exuberance of accusation has permitted himself to charge Plato simultaneously with making the "blunt admission" to this same reader of his intention to hoodwink not only the common citizens of the ideal state, but "*the rulers themselves*" (italics his). Popper divides the myth itself into an uneasy "lengthy preface," and the exposition of two false notions which are to be imposed upon the citizens. The first of these notions is the relatively innocent idea that the "warriors" are born of the earth of their country, and therefore bound in duty to defend it; the second is the guilty racialistic tenet that the citizens possess differing innate capacities — "metals" infused in their souls — which fit them to hold differing stations in the community. Since Plato's "lengthy preface" and expression of uneasiness in introducing the myth appear to have reference only to the first of these ideas, Popper adds the subsidiary hypothesis that Plato has intentionally arranged it thus, in order to distract attention from the really unacceptable second idea. And although Plato, in describing the differing innate capacities of the citizens, explicitly states that these capacities alone, in whatever class in the state they may arise, are to determine social functions, Popper hastens to assert that "this concession is rescinded in later passages in the *Republic* (and also

in the *Laws*)”⁶⁶ Elsewhere Popper comments on Plato’s supposed behavior in thus speaking “as though a rise from the lower classes were permissible,” and then withdrawing the permission, as further evidence of Plato’s guilty hesitation in introducing his “racialism”⁶⁷

We should by this time be able to recognize the distinguishing marks of Popper’s approach. There is, first, his tendency to employ a partisan vocabulary “blunt admission” for “frank statement” that a myth is to be told, “propaganda lie,” used as if it were a synonym for “myth,” without regard for the fact that a myth may be intended to symbolize a truth, and “Blood and Soil,” with its Nazi overtones. We should expect his readiness to scent deception, and observe without surprise his prompt improvisation of a further hypothesis to account for a weakness in his argument, even the fact that this hypothesis involves further discredit to Plato was expectable. We should be forewarned against his assertion that Plato withdraws his stated intention to transfer citizens from station to station as befits their capabilities. “This may be true,” should be the vigilant reader’s initial reaction, “but I had best not accept it on the strength of so partisan a plea.”

We must first consider what, if any, signs of guilt are discernible in Plato’s introduction of the myth (*Republic* 414 B ff.) Socrates has proposed that a medicinal lie be told to the citizens. Asked by Glaucon to name it, he goes on to say at some length that it is but a “Phoenician tale” such as is told by the poets, of what befell in olden times,⁶⁸ a thing not easily credible today. Glaucon, thus kept waiting, says that Socrates seems to shrink from telling, and Socrates replies in mock fear, “You will think that I have right good reason for shrinking when I have told.” Glaucon humorously bids him be brave, and Socrates explains that when the first group of guardians shall have been made fully ready to guide and guard the city, all the citizens are to be told — in what bold and persuasive words he hardly knows — that they have dreamed their whole prior lives up to this moment, and that they have in reality been fostered within the earth, where also their arms and all their possessions have been fashioned, and now they have been brought forth as sons to their native soil and brothers to one another, owing protection and piety to both. Glaucon remarks, “It is not for nothing that you were so

⁶⁶ Popper pp 137-139

⁶⁷ *Ibid* pp 50 496 192

⁶⁸ This follows Shorey’s and Cornford’s rendering which implies that the miraculous origin of men from the soil as the poets say occurred in the early days. It could be rendered to imply that it was the telling of such tales and the successful persuasion of men into believing them which happened in early times. The Greek can be read in either way. The meaning of the epithet “Phoenician” seems to be adequately ex-

plained by the Phoenician origin of Cadmus with whom is associated the tale (mentioned again *Laws* 663 E) of the sowing of the dragon’s teeth and the earthborn warriors that sprang from them. Popper’s suggestion (p 555) that Plato refers to a division of mankind into four races “utilized in Egypt for purposes of political propaganda and imported into Greece by the Phoenicians” seems overingenious and dispensable by anyone not bent on finding reasons to discredit Plato.

bashful about coming out with your lie." Socrates, replying, "It was quite natural that I should be, but all the same hear the rest of the story," goes on to aver that though they are brothers—so the citizens are to be told—yet infused in their souls are different metals, gold, silver, bronze, or iron, as the case may be, destining them to different tasks. In general their children will inherit their parent's natures, but since the citizens are all akin, exceptions may occur; and these the guardians must diligently transfer to their rightful stations, raising or lowering them as required; "for there is an oracle," the tale must add, "that this state shall then be overthrown when the man of iron or brass is its guardian."⁶⁹ When Socrates again expresses his doubt that the citizens can in any way be induced to believe the story, Glaucon agrees, but suggests that their descendants may come to accept it. And Socrates concludes by saying that any success will be helpful in increasing the citizens' loyalty to the state and to one another.

With Plato's myth now in outline before us, we can perceive another unjustifiable procedure that has served to lend support to Popper's argument. Twice in this passage Popper has been guilty of a "criminal negligence" which, until it is observed, works great injury to Plato. He has passed over in silence the fact that Plato asks his citizens to think of each other, all classes alike, as brothers! When Popper analyzed the myth and found in it two ideas, he should have found three; for the citizens' obligation to one another is made equal in importance to their duty to their common land. But Popper, maintaining that Plato wishes above all to keep wide the cleft between the "master caste" and the "human cattle," and even that he secretly regards the rulers as a "conquering war horde" who have subjugated the mass of the citizens,⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Trans. Shorey, Loeb Library.

⁷⁰ Here is involved another of Popper's complicated imputations of guile which is perhaps deserving of discussion, though we cannot cut off individually every head of this hydra. Plato, after describing the training of the first group of guardians and the myth of their origin from the soil, which is to be told to all the citizens, guardians and commoners alike, employs the little dramatic device of imagining their first entry, armed and under the command of their leaders, into the city, which may be conceived as already in full existence, or may be thought of—Plato does not say—simply as a designated site for the settlement, as yet unoccupied. Within it, the guardians must select the place of their encampment, which is to be the spot best suited to enable them, literally, "to hold in check those within, if anyone should be unwilling to obey the laws," and to ward off enemies

from without (415 E). Popper, filled with his conception of the ideal city as a near replica of ancient Sparta, which originated by "forceful subjugation," as Plato well knows, though he wishes to conceal these facts, calls this passage "a description of the triumphant invasion of a warrior class of somewhat mysterious origin—the 'earth-born.'" Popper next examines that part of the *Laws* in which Plato describes the origin of human communities out of the scattered survivors of a great flood, discovering there reference to "war bands" where Plato describes only peaceful communities; and as Plato approaches the time when Sparta is to be founded, and describes the social turmoil which uprooted the Dorians and sent them forth, this time as real war bands, to seek new homes, Popper detects that "Plato becomes evasive": Plato does not state plainly that these Dorians conquered the Peloponnese, but continually

would not wish to see the myth of the metals as the myth of brotherhood. He has, in fact, made it appear that only the "warriors" are to be told that they are autochthonous, and has thus made the myth serve to divide the very citizens whom it is intended to unite.

digresses to talk of other matters, as, says Popper, Plato himself admits, speaking of the "roundabout track of the argument." At last, however, "we get a hint that the Dorian 'settlement' was in fact a violent subjugation." Popper adds that Plato "preferred for obvious reasons to veil in mystery" this discreditable fact (Popper, pp 51-52, 497-498).

One of the remarkable things about all this is the idea that Plato hesitates to admit that Sparta originated by conquest. Plato, it is true, does not emphasize the historically obvious, but he makes it perfectly plain in the passages which Popper cites (*Laws* 682-683), that this was the case. It would certainly have been an inanity for Plato to attempt to conceal from the Greeks of his age the facts of former invasions of Greece by their ancestors. The "roundabout" course of Plato's argument in the early books of the *Laws*, of which Plato himself speaks, does not require explanation in terms of "evasiveness." He has in his eye that involved structure of the conversation, seemingly artless and natural, like the rambling talk of old men which nevertheless describes several times a circle and comes back to the same point, namely, the supreme importance for the success of any state that its laws shall aim not at courage alone and success in war, but at the whole of virtue (cf *Laws* 688 B). Plato has skilfully contrived to reach this conclusion by following more than one line of reasoning.

Nor does Plato, in fact, appear to regard the Dorian conquest as in any way discreditable. Similarly, the conquests of the Persian Cyrus appear to awaken in Plato no commiseration for the conquered populations (694 A-E), but only admiration for the institutions of the Persians which made possible their success. This attitude does not commend him to the modern reader and in order to absolve him we are forced to remind ourselves that his ideal cities do not engage in conquest, and that in discussing the origins of Sparta and the Persian empire, he is talking history, not urging contemporary policy. But Popper, we must re-

member, believes that Plato's *Republic* is a proposal to recreate at Athens a proto Sparta, and that (though Plato does not intend his fellow Athenians to notice this) its common citizens are to be made correlative with Helots, he therefore thinks that in admitting even by a "hint" that Sparta originated by conquest, Plato has made a slip, and that in allowing "a short but triumphant tale of the subjugation of a settled population" to appear in his *Republic*, Plato has given himself away to the discerning eye.

But there are other and, I think, more plausible ways of explaining this greatly exaggerated march of the "earthborn." In the first place, the title "earthborn" applies to them no more than to the common people, since all the citizens alike are to be told that they are born of their soil, nor is their origin more "mysterious" than that of the rest of the inhabitants. Plato has not told us the origin of any of his citizens. The march into the city may, as we have said, be no more than the arrival at the designated site of a new settlement. Or, if the city is conceived as already existing, the picture in Plato's mind may be derived from the ceremonies attending the conclusion of the first year of military training of the Athenian *Ephebi*; Aristotle describes the custom in his day of their appearing at the festival on that occasion, and giving an exhibition of their military evolutions (*Const. Ath.* 42). Or Plato may have imagined a city which had a few years earlier, determined to adopt the ideal constitution and had then authorized the selection of some of its youth for training as guardians. And now the day has arrived when the training is completed and the new constitution is to be inaugurated. This is an innocent alternative of at least equal weight to Popper's fantasy of guilt and deception.

The mention of the guardians' task of guarding the city from external enemies and from internal disobedience to law, which Popper calls the "decisive" passage proving conquest and oppression is not different from a minimum description of the

No less damaging and no less unfair is the omission of another feature of Plato's myth, namely, that it is thought of as being boldly told to living persons about themselves, in defiance of their own immediate memories of their previous lives. From Popper's presentation, it would be quite possible to suppose that the tale told to the citizens concerned the distant past, describing perhaps the origin from the soil of their earliest progenitors. Popper's omission tempers the myth's audacity and thus strengthens his own hypothesis of Plato's guilty hesitancy at introducing his racialism by weakening a dangerous competitor—the possibility that Socrates' hesitation and humorous expressions of dismay have nothing to do with ethical considerations, but are grounded on the very obvious incredibility of the tale itself.

Our suggestion that the hesitation of "Socrates" reflects Plato's concern for the credibility of his tale may be strengthened by consideration of his practice elsewhere. No author of a dramatic dialogue can afford to lose the credence of his audience in the dramatic probability of what he is presenting; the theorist, also, if he is to carry conviction, must not seem unaware of the degree of likelihood of his explanations or recommendations. That Plato gave careful attention to both these points, the evidence of the dialogues as a whole abundantly prove. A dramatic device from a later book of the *Republic*, to which we have already pointed as an instance of Plato's careful preparation of his climactic effects, will serve also to illustrate our present point, his discounting in advance of the reader's doubt as to the practicality of a proposal, or the naturalness of the interlocutor's reaction. This is the extended introduction in Book V (450 A-D, 457 B-D) to Plato's three most controversial proposals, the equality of woman, the marriage and property regulations, and the philosopher kings. Here Socrates hesitates again and again, and requires reassurance from all the company; and here again Glaucon helps Plato, by his ready expressions of surprise, to dramatize the reader's sense of the improbability that such measures could ever be carried into effect. In these three instances Glaucon is helpful also in converting the reader eventually to a belief in their plausibility, by his later acceptance of them as advisable and right.

To revert to the tale of the citizens' birth from the soil: Plato does not require Glaucon to agree, when he has heard Socrates' tale, that the idea of

task of any modern government: to defend the nation, uphold the constitution, and keep down crime. The brief phrase here must be read in the light of other passages which describe the responsible and benevolent relations of the guardians to the bulk of the citizens; it must not, as Popper would have it, be first arbitrarily interpreted, and then employed as evidence of the falsity of good intentions expressed elsewhere. Pop-

per has, in fact, created almost wholly out of his own preconceptions this picture of a triumphant subjugation, has given the term "earthborn" a mysterious signification where only a plain reference to the myth of the metals is involved, and has attributed evasiveness to Plato, regarding both the origins of Sparta and the functions of his guardians, where only frankness exists.

convincing the first group of citizens is practicable, but only that in later generations the myth may be believed; ⁷¹ and this marks Plato's own doubt on the point. There is no need to assume any other than these daylight and aboveboard causes of Plato's "hesitation." ⁷² And we may claim every right

⁷¹ That such a myth related of distant ancestors might be believed by the common people, at least, Plato had full proof in the tradition of the Athenians' own origin from the soil of Attica (mentioned, e.g., in Aesch., *Eumen* 13, Eurip., *Ion* 589, Aristoph., *Wasps* 1076, Isocrates, *Panegyri* 24, *Panath* 124, Lysias II, 17-19, Plato, *Menexenus* 239 B). But it is quite certain that by Plato's day and for some time before, largely as the result of Ionian science and the sophistic influence, the educated Athenian had come to doubt as a matter of course the literal truth of all mythological tales. Some could be successfully allegorized, like the tale of Boreas carrying off a nymph in the *Phaedrus*, some could be otherwise rationalized into credibility, as we apparently see Thucydides doing with this very tale of the Athenians' autochthony (I, 2, 5), still others were simply disbelieved. And in the *Gorgias*, when Socrates is about to tell his myth of judgment in the afterworld, he is made to say to Callicles (523 A, trans. Lamb, Loeb Library, slightly altered), "You will regard this as a fable, I fancy, but I as an actual account." In a similar fashion, Glaucon could well be expected to doubt whether it was reasonable to imagine that even after lapse of time, the rulers of the city would believe the myth of their origin from the soil.

But Plato, and Socrates, it seems, were in a somewhat different position from that of the average skeptical Athenian of good education. Plato's attitude is well summarized by Shorey (*Republic*, Loeb Library, vol II, pp. lxiv-vii). Plato was able to disbelieve the particularities of myths, while believing in the basic validity of truths which they contained. In consequence of this attitude, it is not always possible to say with confidence whether a particular element in a Platonic myth belongs to the symbolic dress or to the underlying truth, to put this in another way, a reader unacquainted with the whole range of Plato's thought cannot easily gauge the degree of credence Plato asks for his myth as a whole. Popper has been misled by this Platonic

ambiguity more than once, particularly in relation to the myth in the *Politicus* (see our pp. 463-464, 612, 623-624). On p. 555, he asserts that Plato proffers the idea of men born from the earth, contained in that myth, "as a true story." As against this, Plato has warned his observant reader (*Politicus* 268 D) that his myth is an instructive and entertaining tale for boys, cf. also *Laws* 713. But the best proof that Plato does not literally believe his own myths lies in the varying symbolism employed in different myths which express the same basic truths (e.g., in *Phaedo* and *Republic*).

Popper has gone astray also in another respect systematically connected with his misinterpretation of Plato's *Republic*. It is an essential part of his case to prove that Plato's guardians are a "master caste," racially distinct, and superior to the other citizens. Hence, just as Popper speaks throughout of the "earthborn" as including the "warriors" only, misleadingly ignoring Plato's inclusion of all the citizens, so also, by way of corroboration, he asserts (p. 555) that "the Athenian nobility" (italics ours) claimed to be earthborn, "as Plato says in the *Symposium*, 191 B." This is a simple misstatement of fact, combined with a most misemployed citation. Athenian citizens were supposed to be autochthonous regardless of whether they were noble or not. And in the *Symposium*, the reference leads only to Aristophanes' humorous myth, where he tells of the early days when men were globeshaped creatures with four arms and legs and when all alike originated from earth. There is no statement anywhere that the Athenian "nobility" claimed to be autochthonous.

⁷² Now that we have shown that Plato displays no moral shame on proposing his lie, we may revert to the "idealization" of which Popper complains in Cornford's note *ad loc.*, and express our agreement with Cornford's description of the myth as a "harmless allegory." For Plato's *genesis pseudos* we should favor the translation "lie" (or "falsehood") of generous proper

to point out that Socrates' delay and "bashfulness" are definitely related by Plato to the idea of the citizens' birth from the soil, and are not in evidence when Socrates tells the part of the myth that concerns the different metals. For this latter idea, which parallels the division of mankind described in the *Phaedrus* on the basis of their differing degrees of moral insight, Plato shows no shame, either here or elsewhere.⁷³

The rest of Popper's argument regarding the myth of the metals can be briefly answered. In the first place, since Plato does not, as we shall show, withdraw his intention to elevate "golden" and "silver" children into the guardian class, his supposed hesitation in so doing cannot exist. The added assertion that he withdraws it "also in the *Laws*" is a false parallel. In that state, there are no classes of guardians and of citizen-workers; there are

tions." In this we neither demand the translation "noble lie," nor accept Crossman's ironical use of this same phrase as the equivalent of "ignoble lie" (meaning a propaganda fiction of any degree of falsity which a ruler may find useful), nor approve the implications of pride and oppression which attach to Popper's "lordly lie."

In this connection it is appropriate to mention a curious semi-parallel between Popper's treatment of the myth of the metals and Toynbee's. Popper (p. 493) acknowledges, despite fundamental divergencies, some indebtedness to Toynbee, and it is probable therefore that the two interpretations are not entirely independent. Toynbee has been engaged, to use his own phrase, in "drawing the covert" of race, to see whether racial differences can account for the wide range of human cultural achievement, and he is about to announce that they cannot. It is his belief that other thinkers before him have been aware of the emptiness of racial claims, and in this connection brings in Plato's myth of the metals (I, pp. 247-249) — wrongly, we think, since Plato is not at all discussing the ethnographic divisions of the human race, e.g., "Alpine," "Nordic," or "Mediterranean," with which Toynbee has been dealing. He regards Plato as "half-humorous, half-cynical" in propounding his myth, which is put forward frankly as a fraud designed to reconcile the common citizens to their necessary lot, by "mendaciously" ascribing to innate differences the effects of divergent upbringing and education. To Toynbee it is apparently inconceivable that Plato believed in the reality of innate differences sufficiently great to justify autocratic gov-

ernment; as he sees it, Plato makes quite plain to his reader his knowledge that such differences cannot exist, and thus gives "the fallacy of Race . . . its final exposure." Toynbee and Popper agree, therefore, in seeing in this passage cynicism, and in talking of "race"; they are alike also in overlooking the reason which lies closest to hand for Socrates' hesitation, namely, his doubt that contemporary adults can reasonably be expected to swallow a fairy-tale with themselves as central characters. Against both Toynbee and Popper, we submit that there is here no question of race, but only of differences in endowment conceived as occurring within a racially homogeneous population, much as variations in I.Q. were believed until recently in America to be almost entirely hereditary (cf. p. 241 and p. 537). And there is no cynicism, only the (to us) unacceptable notion of telling the citizens an edifying falsehood which embodies what Plato believes to be an ethical truth (their mutual obligation) and a fact of nature (human variability in endowment). To the extent that Toynbee and Popper agree, therefore, we can answer both with confidence. On the other hand, Toynbee is clearly at odds with Popper as to Plato's message to his reader: Popper sees him attempting to dupe the reader into accepting as true the existence of "racial" differences, while, for Toynbee, Plato scoffs visibly at the very idea. This contradiction may help us to show that neither interpretation is necessary, but that Plato honestly shares with his reader his intent to tell his citizens, in symbolic fashion, what he believes to be two basic truths.

⁷³ See pp. 216-217 above.

only citizens, metics, and slaves. The fact that Plato does not provide in the *Laws* for freeing and elevating into the citizen class able and virtuous slaves is regrettable, but it proves nothing about the different situation in the *Republic*.⁷⁴ The horrendous charge, put into italics, that Plato intends to deceive by his myth even the rulers, can be regarded calmly by one who recollects that for Plato the tale embodies, along with its literal falsity, important truths, and that it symbolizes the ideal not only of willing workers, but also of rulers looking with fraternal concern to the well-being of their lesser brothers. It is eloquent proof of the value that he imputes to loyal devotion to the common good, that Plato should propose, albeit in a passing and half-serious way, to dilute by mythological admixture the philosophic omniscience of his philosopher kings.

One of Plato's highest honors in the modern world has been the reverence shown him as the foremost champion, against brute force, of the humane power of persuasion, which Whitehead has taken as the measure of man's moral progress through the centuries. But Popper would rob him of this credit also. In introducing his myth of the metals, Plato speaks of the possibility of "persuading" by this lie of generous proportions, the people of the ideal city. And Popper has taken the occasion to warn us against being ourselves "persuaded" by Plato's use of this fair-sounding word, in many other passages in which it occurs. We are to recollect that in political contexts, and particularly "where he advocates that the statesman should rule 'by means of both persuasion and force,'" "by 'persuasion' of the masses, Plato means largely lying propaganda," and probably has in mind his customary conception of "the doctor-politician administering lies"⁷⁵ Against this implication that Plato has again been caught covering over and concealing from his reader his true and disreputable meaning, we shall contend, on the contrary, that he has nothing to conceal, that by "persuasion of the masses" he does not mean lying in more than an infinitesimal number of cases, and that even here he has been perfectly open with his reader. Without attempting a complete listing of the numerous distinguishable senses of the versatile word *peithein*, to persuade, and its derivatives and cognates, we shall offer instances sufficient to show what damage Popper has done to a fair statement of the case in representing Plato's use as preponderantly suggestive of deceit. In

⁷⁴ Popper believes (p. 497) that Plato intends to judge "goldenness," etc., in the *Republic*, from the mere fact of a child's parents' status (his arguments to this effect will be discussed on pp. 535ff.), and consequently believes that the slave status assigned in the *Laws* to the child of parents one of whom is a slave, the other free, proves that Plato, in the *Republic*, would

have assigned worker status to the child of parents, one of whom was a worker, the other a guardian, or, *a fortiori*, to any child born of worker parents on both sides. Since Popper's major premise is here completely unfounded, his conclusion may be reasonably dismissed.

⁷⁵ Popper, pp. 138, 552, note 5, and 553-554.

the process of refuting the errors of his critic, we welcome the opportunity of revealing some of those Platonic uses of persuasion which prompted Whitehead to present Plato as its patron saint.

Plato is naturally at liberty to employ the Greek word in any of its recognized Greek uses; and it is not his doing that, like many other words, it has shades of meaning ranging from the most unsavory to the fully honorable. We shall agree with Popper in finding near the bottom of the scale, as the word is employed by Plato, the meaning illustrated in *Republic* 364 C, where it is said that soothsayers promise to secure indulgence for the crimes of their patrons by "persuading" the gods with spells and incantations. But the case is less simple when Popper implies that hardly higher in the scale is that meaning which he has so much stressed in his criticism of the myth of the metals, to "persuade" someone to believe an untruth. The use of the concept in this passage is so bound up with the whole question of the function of myth and of rhetoric in Plato's thinking, that we shall best approach it in the light of a wider discussion.

Plato has made it very clear in the *Gorgias* that he can use the word in varying senses in close proximity to one another. "Persuasion" first appears (453 A-D) as the function of all arts which produce conviction in the minds of hearers, including on the one hand true teaching, as of mathematics, and on the other, rhetoric, as the sophist Gorgias conceives it. This rhetoric, which must convince large numbers of persons in a short time, imparts opinion only, and is shown by "Socrates" to be an art of "persuasion for belief" (453 E-455 A), exercised upon the ignorant by the ignorant and the unprincipled (455 E-460 D), for the sake of private interest (452 E, 456 C-457 C). Here, then, we have seen Plato employ "persuade" both in the broad sense, which includes an honorable use of persuasion for imparting knowledge, and also in a degraded sense, to describe an ignorant, irresponsible, and self-interested rhetoric of which Plato fully disapproves. In this latter sense we meet it often in the dialogues. But we have not yet done with Plato's use of the word "persuade" in connection with rhetoric. For further meanings we may turn to the *Phaedrus*.

Here Plato is discussing and illustrating what he calls, literally, "the soul-leading art of words," rhetoric, conceived broadly as the whole art of winning consent or convincing by means of speech. There is no limitation as to topic, or intent, or number of hearers; both written and spoken kinds are included. And here again forms of the word "persuade" are employed more than once to describe the whole art (e.g., 271 D). Plato, however, divides rhetoric into true and false: the false rhetoric of the sophists and orators is again identified with the art of persuading, without knowledge, those who are equally ignorant, and again it is implied that its purpose is selfish and irresponsible (260 A-261 E). The true art, on the other hand, must be based upon knowledge; its practitioner "must know the truth," and must be able

to divide things into classes and to comprehend particulars under a general idea (273 D-E, 277 B-C); he must adapt his speech, if he is to win assent, to the kinds of souls addressed, and offer to the complex soul discourses complex and harmonious, but "simple talks to the simple soul" (271 D, 277 C). Such knowledge, once acquired, is best employed in the pleasing of "our divine masters"; but it must be acquired even by those who are to attain the baser aim of pleasing men (273 E-274 A).⁷⁶ Of those employing fully-developed and perfected rhetoric for this latter purpose, the dialogue seems to imply, Pericles is the outstanding example.⁷⁷

Up to this point in the *Phaedrus*, Plato has spoken of the whole art of speech as that of persuasion; but now as in the *Gorgias* he employs the word in a narrower sense. We find him speaking of the finished artist in words as one who will be able by means of his art to teach — and this is its noblest use, to which it is put by true philosophers, imparting sound and fruitful knowledge to receptive souls, or it may be used, alternatively, to "persuade" (277 C). Here again we have "persuasion" contrasted with "teaching"; yet — and this is what we wish to emphasize — here it is not persuasion of an ignoble sort. It is a method of producing belief which may be rightly employed by the true artist in words, in cases which do not admit of prolonged and personal instruction; and, when the souls to be persuaded are simple, it is itself simple. But it has no selfish aims, and it seeks to inculcate what is pleasing to God.

Another use of persuasion with which Plato is in sympathy is found in the *Apology*, where Socrates, describing the heart of his mission (30 A), says that he goes about doing nothing but "persuading" old and young among the Athenians to care for their souls, above all else. Again in the *Phaedo*, "persuasion" is honored. The talk is of death and of the immortality of the soul, and Socrates, though confident and serene, is not by any means dogmatically certain of the truth of his belief, nor does he seek to demonstrate it to his friends. Simmias at one point, expressing the general view, says that if truth and certainty are not to be had, the brave man must take "whatever human doctrine is best and hardest to disprove," and sail through life upon it as on a raft (85 D). And throughout the *Phaedo*, there are many passages in which Socrates and his friends speak of being "persuaded" or of "persuading" themselves that the soul indeed survives (e.g., 91 B, 92 D, 108 C-E). Near the end Socrates offers to tell a myth whose truth he says he would not be able to prove, yet he is "persuaded" that it is true. When he has finished, he says again that though the myth cannot be taken literally, yet "that this, or something like it is true," a man "may properly and worthily venture to

⁷⁶ Quotations are from the translation by Lamb, Loeb Library.

⁷⁷ Another example of a finished orator

cited by Plato is "Adrastus," a legendary figure who may represent the orator Antiphon.

believe" (114 D).⁷⁸ Where Socrates can thus "persuade" himself and his closest friends and employ thereto a myth, there can be no suggestion that persuasion and the use of myths constitute the administration of lies.

In the *Timaeus*, we find two striking instances of "persuasion." One occurs in the account of the origin of the Cosmos (48 A). Here Reason is said to control Necessity — conceived as the mindless and purposeless ground of the universe — to the end of making created things as good as possible, by "intelligent persuasion." A little later (51 E) the existence of the eternal changeless forms, in addition to material objects, is rendered probable by the parallel distinction between reason, which is firm and unalterable, and partaken of by the gods and by very few men, and true opinion, which is alterable, shared by all men, and derived from "persuasion." Here the province of "persuasion" lies in the relation between intelligence and the irrational, or the imperfectly rational. Yet it is the means to good and to truth.

Summing up, then, the uses to which we have seen Plato put the concept of persuasion, we find that these may be roughly classified thus: (1) the function of speech which wins assent, in all its kinds; (2) the unworthy persuasion of the ignorant by those who are themselves ignorant and self-interested; (3) persuasion by those who know, but who put their complete knowledge of the art to uses pleasing not to god, but to men; (4) the approvable use of speech to win consent, by those who know and whose motives are irreproachable, but (a) under conditions which preclude teaching, or (b) upon topics which make proof impossible, or (c) when those who are to be persuaded are not fully rational. If we examine those occurrences of the word which Popper cites to prove that, in Plato's pages, "persuasion" is linked with deception, we find that many of them refer to class (2), and express only Plato's disapproval of the sophist's use of persuasion, not his own intent to employ it similarly; others belong to class (4) and do not involve any intention to deceive, but merely the impossibility under the circumstances (so Plato believed) of imparting fully rational knowledge.

We have now to investigate how Plato's use of the concept of persuasion is related to the lying propaganda which Popper sees in it. First of all, we must agree that the use of lies in certain circumstances is advocated in the *Republic* for purposes of government and that though the word "persuade" is not used in connection with them, there can be no doubt that some use of the persuasive art of speech would be required to make the auxiliaries "blame chance and not the rulers" when they are told that the fall of the lot has determined their marriages, whereas really these are engineered by the rulers for eugenic reasons. In this instance we have the only sanctioning

⁷⁸ Quotations are from the translation by Fowler, Loeb Library. The citations in the text include some passages in which the

idea of persuasion is conveyed without the use of the Greek word *peithein* or its cognates.

by Plato of an outright practical lie, to be told, to be sure, for benevolent reasons (and only for such purposes does Plato sanction the telling), but a lie and nothing more. We, like Popper, find this policy distasteful. This lie, then, and any others like it which Plato's rather general permission might justify, constitute such basis as exists for Popper's charge that Plato proposes to use "lying propaganda" in his city. But they do not justify the charge that it is "largely" lying propaganda which Plato means by "persuasion of the masses," as can be well illustrated by the myth of the metals itself.

In another part of the *Republic*, speaking of the education of young children, Plato proposes to use at the earliest ages, "lies" (or "falsehoods"), by which he means, he explains, the fable or myth, "which is, taken as whole, false, but there is truth in it also" (377 A). In these tales, however, there must be no misrepresentation of the gods, for "the young are not able to distinguish what is from what is not 'allegory' (378 D)."⁷⁹ Plato thus does not intend his myths to embody essential falsehood. Nor, in the *Phaedo*, was Socrates' myth of the afterworld intended to deceive. In the same way, the myth of the metals is a fable to be believed by adults, and the "persuasion" of the citizens to accept it is Plato's way of teaching truth. We may dislike its attitude of intellectual superiority, but it is not properly described as "lying propaganda."

Similarly, though in differing degrees, Plato intends both his Statesman and his Statesman's assistant, the rhetorician, in the city of the *Politicus*, to inculcate not lies, but truths, the one by his laws, the other by his "mythology" (309 C-D, 304 C). If politic lies for the good of the citizens are also to be dispensed by the rhetorician at the Statesman's behest, they are not mentioned; in any case, there is no reason for supposing that they would be employed more than very occasionally, just as there is seldom need for the strong drugs to which in the *Republic* Plato compares them.

In the *Laws*, we hear of no medicinal lies, as distinct from myths, to be administered to the self-governing citizens. There is only the one passage already mentioned, in which Plato says that even if the virtuous way of life were not also the happy one, any lawgiver of the slightest worth would teach this to the citizens; but that since, fortunately, it is true, such teaching will be no deception.⁸⁰ Plato adds here, too, that myths—again he refers to the myth of origin from the soil—may perhaps be devised, such as will bring the greatest good to the city by inducing the citizens to the willing practices of virtue, if they are persuaded to believe them (663 C-664 A); and the citizens must "charm themselves" unceasingly (we are reminded of the same word, used in the *Phaedo*, 77 E, of the belief in immortality) to think that goodness and happiness are one (665 C). Popper has seen sinister "persuasion" embodied in the "preludes," those short homilies which, taken along

⁷⁹ Trans Shorey, Loeb Library.

⁸⁰ See p. 64 above.

with the actual laws, constitute one important instance of the combination of "persuasion and force" to which Popper has referred. But the preludes are emphatically not the utterances of the "doctor-politician administering lies"; whoever doubts this is advised to read one or more of them (e.g. 721 B-D, 773, 854 B-C). They are examples of the art of the true rhetorician as Plato conceives him in the *Phaedrus*, fitting simple discourses to simple souls, persuading them not to false but to true belief.⁸¹

As one reviews the course of the just-completed argument, two points should emerge with special prominence. (1) The lying use of persuasion is to be slight in extent, and is to be rigorously restricted to the most responsible and disinterested persons. One may doubt the possibility of drawing a *cordon sanitaire* around the serpent of deception and preventing it from spreading its infection into other areas, corrupting the rulers and spreading distrust among

⁸¹ Popper inserts a long footnote (pp. 553-554) dealing with persuasion in Plato, and intended to show that Plato, in advocating its use, is advocating lying propaganda; the note, however, shows only the dangers of general statements about Platonic usage, not founded upon a thorough and nonpartisan use of lexicography. Popper sets up two uses of the word, (a) the influencing of opinion by fair means, and (b) "taking [sic] over by foul means." He then seems to say (p. 554, top) that it is occasionally correct to take "persuasion" in Plato in sense (a), but unaccountably gives as his only example of such an honest use a passage (*Republic* 365 D) in which, as he himself says a few lines below, an apt paraphrase of the meaning would be "cheating." To cite no other favorable uses of the word in Plato is, in effect, not just. In political contexts, however, Popper says, Plato employs the word in sense (b), and in illustration of this use, cites many passages, in all of which, he declares, "the 'art of persuasion' as opposed to the 'art of imparting true knowledge' . . . is associated with rhetoric, make-believe, or propaganda." This, while literally true, is most misleading. For, as we have shown, none of these three is for Plato necessarily false; even "make-believe," as in myths, can be basically true. On investigation about half of Popper's list of passages (*Gorgias* 454 B-455 A, *Phaedrus* 260 B, *Sophist* 222 C, perhaps *Philebus* 58 A) are found to involve reference to the "persuasion" of the sophists, a thing which Plato would have scorned to advocate or imitate. Others (*Theaetetus* 201 A, *States-*

man 296 B ff., 304 C-D, *Timaeus* 51 E, *Rep.* 511 D, 533 E) involve persuasion employed *faute de mieux*, in situations which, in Plato's opinion, preclude true teaching, and do not portend deception. But perhaps the most glaring example of Popper's failure to deal fairly with his reader in this connection is his citation of *Gorgias* 454 B-455 A, a passage which prominently employs the word "persuasion" in the broad and neutral sense in which it covers all speech which wins assent, specifically including what Popper calls "the art of imparting true knowledge." To have cited this passage only as illustrating Plato's use of "persuasion" in the "foul" sense (it does illustrate this use as well) is special pleading.

On p. 610, Popper suggests (note 69) that Plato, in recommending the use of "persuasion and force," is merely proposing to add consciously deceptive propaganda ("this would indicate that Plato was well aware of Pareto's recipe") to the violence of the Thirty Tyrants, and with this one addition, to accept their record of ruthless coercion as a model of proper political action. This allegation, so far as it concerns persuasion, rests on no further evidence than the passages discussed above, and so far as it concerns the Thirty Tyrants, rests on the identification of Plato's views with those of the extreme Athenian oligarchs, an identification which we have shown to be at fault on pp. 326ff. Altogether it constitutes an excellent instance of the way in which unsound conclusions may be pyramided into sheer illusion.

the ruled; one may not deny Plato's intention to do so. And one may argue that had good reason been presented to him for anticipating so self-contradictory a result, he would have cast deceit utterly out of his ideal kingdom. (2) One is impressed with the orderly diversity and richness of the concept of "persuasion," and its fruitful use in Plato's hands. From cosmology to politics, from mathematics to immortality — only a master of a dialectic at once flexible and firm enough to retain its structural identity from dialogue to dialogue, could have spanned so wide a gap. It is evident, therefore, that Popper's fusion of Plato's carefully discriminated types of persuasion into one amorphous whole is an extreme oversimplification.

But we have yet to adduce what Whitehead seems to have regarded as Plato's chief credential as advocate of the honorable practice of persuasion.⁸² This is the method and character of the Platonic dialogues themselves, which in the main exemplify the use of persuasion in its most rational form. The right of objection, of counterproposal, is everywhere recognized. No one is bludgeoned or threatened into the acceptance of a point of view. So far as such a thing is possible on paper, Plato has sought to put his interlocutor on a parity with his Socratic self, and to leave the issue to the arbitrament of that personified "argument" whose aim and outcome no man is empowered to coerce.⁸³

The method of the dialogues appears as the closest possible literary approximation of the method of philosophical instruction which Plato recommends for those whom alone he regarded as truly educable in the higher reaches of philosophical instruction, and which in all likelihood he applied to the students at his Academy. It would have place within the city of the Republic, it is true, only as employed in the higher education of the guardians; here again we confront that honest but unfortunate belief of Plato that most men are natively incapable of being brought to the full exercise of reason; but for them he hoped to obtain the benefit of conclusions rationally reached, so presented as to win their unconstrained consent. In either case, what Plato champions is an ideal of persuasion, responsibly employed for

⁸² *Adventures of Ideas*, e.g., pp. 64-65, 105-109.

⁸³ Popper, p. 413, acknowledges the "reasonable spirit" in which arguments are conducted in Plato's writings, but limits his concession to the Plato of the earlier dialogues and does not abate his contention that, even so, Plato intended to prevent the free use of reason by the philosopher kings of the Republic. We shall again confront Popper's opinion on this point, pp. 618f. below. Here we may point out that the spirit of reasonableness in argument is clearly in evidence in the *Republic*, as attested by

Crossman (cf. our p. 493) and in the *Phaedo*, as attested by Popper (cf. our p. 367, n. 285); yet these are dialogues in which Popper has maintained that the undogmatic and modest attitude of Socrates toward others' opinions has given place to Platonic authoritarianism and dogmatic certainty. Popper's position thus entails an obvious inconsistency which can, however, be easily avoided by assuming with the present writer that a commitment to accept the verdict of reason was always a fundamental principle of Plato's thought.

the sake of the highest attainable good, and rejecting so far as may be the blind compulsions of force and fear.

We have seen how Popper would reduce Platonic justice to the moral nullity of a fraudulent device for luring unwary lovers of democratic equality to the acceptance of a program founded on the radical denial of equalitarian principles. In attempting this transvaluation, Plato, as Popper views him, was practicing upon his readers, ancient and modern, that same dishonest art of persuasion which he cynically admitted his intention of employing for gulling the citizens of his perfect state.

Popper has also not failed to point out the contrast between the permission Plato accords his rulers to tell medicinal lies to the citizens, and the stern prohibition of the citizens themselves from meddling with untruth. Plato's religion, too, is seen to be little more than a political fraud.⁸⁴ Popper's conclusion, thus, is that for Plato all truth is "subordinated to the more fundamental principle that the rule of the master class must be strengthened." Though Plato may mean by truth what is commonly denoted by the concept, his love of truth, that primal virtue in a philosopher, so nearly synonymous with philosophy itself, can be seen for what it is, a shameful pretense.⁸⁵

Having destroyed to his own satisfaction two of Plato's historic strongholds, justice and truth, Popper pauses to consider what remains. Still standing, he notes, are a number of "ideas, such as Goodness, Beauty, and Happiness," to which presently "Wisdom" is added. Popper has assigned himself the task of reducing these supposed Platonic splendors to sordid actuality by showing how in each case this Athenian Pareto has, with varying degrees of conscious or unconscious deceitfulness, exploited moral sentiments to cover totalitarian actualities. Goodness, thus, is found to be hardly more than a synonym for the stability of the arrested state. Happiness for the privileged master race is equated with their position of authority, for all others, with the impoverished security of accepting and liking the servile position assigned to them by the rulers. The wisdom, too, with which Plato endows his misnamed philosophers, is a most dubious quality, exhausted in the discharge of three questionable functions: to cling with dogmatic tenacity to sterile and abstract truths, to separate themselves prestigiously from all ordinary citizens by their aura of esoteric knowledge, and to preserve, by the use of a mysterious pseudo-genetics invented by Plato for the purpose, the purity of the master race, thus triply reënforsing the permanence of the arrested totalitarian state. Finally, beauty is an ideal even more vicious in its effects. It has led Plato to conceive the politician as one who "composes cities for beauty's sake," who in his ruthless search for personal aesthetic satisfaction

⁸⁴ See n. 267, p. 358, and n. 50, pp. 521f.

⁸⁵ Popper, pp. 136-141.

is willing to use as his medium other men's lives, and to "liquidate" those who object to forming part of the composition.⁸⁶

Plato, an aesthete who has sacrificed the highest interests of morality to make an aesthetic holiday! There is a colossal irony in this when we remember how this same Plato has been brought to book by the same complainant for having sacrificed in the interests of Spartan austerity the aesthetic richness of poetry and the other arts. Surely this is more than a paradox.

At the root of the confusion are two supplementary errors. First, there is the failure to see that beauty for Plato is not something externally related to moral values. On the contrary, the virtues, for Plato, cannot adequately be described in abstraction from their aesthetic qualities. We have seen how basic to Platonic "temperance" is the essentially aesthetic notion of "harmony" or "consonance,"⁸⁷ how for the Socrates of the *Gorgias* it is both better and "fairer" — "more beautiful" — to suffer than to commit injustice. A striking example is supplied by the description in the *Phaedrus* (247 C-D, 250 B-C, trans. Fowler, Loeb Library), of those divine principles of justice, wisdom, temperance, and beauty perceived with piercing joy by the soul before birth, "shining in brightness," "perfect and simple and calm and happy apparitions," "visible only to mind, the pilot of the soul," and ever after longed for and sought in their earthly embodiments by men below. In the Platonic universe it has been providentially arranged that among these ideals themselves there is no conflict: in achieving virtue, man attains at once happiness and moral beauty.⁸⁸ It is to tear asunder these inseparables to demand that Plato should not feel aesthetic satisfaction in the contemplation of the city or the man who in his terms embodies all excellence and enjoys the highest happiness.

What, then, has prompted Popper to suppose that Plato was sacrificing the interests of others in his search for beauty? The answer seems to be a perverse literal-mindedness in construing Platonic metaphors. Plato speaks in the *Republic* (500 C ff.) of the philosopher as a sort of artist who molds himself, and others also, if reluctantly he comes to power, "stamping on the plastic matter of human nature" the images of sobriety, justice, and the other forms of moral good, including beauty of soul. Such an artist, Plato tells us, must be permitted a clean tablet upon which to paint the ideal constitution and the corresponding individual character. Now in this Plato is clearly employing aesthetic categories, but quite as clearly he is subordinating them

⁸⁶ References for this paragraph are to be found in Popper, pp. 132, 142, 143, 144, 145, 148-150, 161-163, 165, 193-194, 558-559.

⁸⁷ See p. 243, and note.

⁸⁸ Further passages in the *Republic* expressing the unity of beauty and virtue are 484 C-D, 588 A; in the *Laws*, e.g., 705 E-

706 A, 859 D-E. That these two concepts were linked by the Greeks generally is attested by R. W. Livingstone, *Portrait of Socrates*, 1938, p. liii, and is again asserted, with a wholesome warning against confusing Greek feeling with modern aestheticism, by Kitto, *The Greeks*, p. 170.

to the moral qualities which form their ground. The beauty which emerges from the painting is not created to please the painter; it is merely the structure of moral goodness shining by its own light.

But Popper has built also upon another part of the metaphor. By laying undue stress upon the single element of "canvas cleaning," by bringing in from other Platonic contexts and misinterpreting Plato's remarks on the methods of selecting suitable candidates for membership in an ideal or reformed state,⁸⁹ and by adding his own belief that it was at Athens that the "Republic" was to be immediately installed,⁹⁰ Popper has imbued Plato's demand for a clean tablet with a gratuitously sinister quality. It is to be recalled once more that the *Republic* is a sketch of a fully ideal community, the limiting case, as it were; to say that such a community would have to be without commitments to previously existing, imperfect institutions and mores is hardly more than a tautology. If we look to the city of the *Laws*, the founding of a new colony with carefully selected citizens involves no selfish aesthetic ruthlessness. Even the reform of an existing community beginning with the removal or execution of criminal elements is not necessarily brutal, unless all Greek penology is so.

It is, therefore, worse than idle to talk of Plato's indulging his aesthetic predilections at the cost of morals. We may criticize justly his ideal of moral goodness for the common citizen and regret the absence from the painter's image of elements of political activity and self-direction which to us form part of that ideal picture. But for Plato, these elements did not admit of embodiment, were without the region of possibility. For him the ideal city shone with a beauty inherent and proper to its own perfected nature, the "beauty of laws and institutions," indistinguishable from the good.

In behalf of three of Plato's specified ideals — justice, truth, and beauty — we have now offered the major part of our defense against Popper's suspicions that they are deceitful glass gems. To perform in this place a like service for Platonic goodness, happiness, and wisdom, would involve an unwarranted duplication of our own earlier and later discussion of these themes. But we may at least set ourselves on record as having said that nothing in Plato's text obliges any reader, however, vigilant, to accept Popper's exposé of the actualities behind the Platonic façade, or to believe in the Machiavelian motivation that Popper has suspected. It is only on the supposition that he has already established the foulness of Plato's actual aims that Popper can demand the right of construing the fair names attached into a corresponding dishonesty and can then present the difficulty of penetrating these disguises as a proof of the diabolical cunning, mingled with self-deception, of the mind which so successfully concealed its evil nature from the eyes of centuries of deluded readers.

⁸⁹ See pp. 348-354.

⁹⁰ See pp. 327-329.

But, we must ask, what is the predisposing cause that leads Popper chronically to indulge these sinister imaginings? We may be helped toward answering this question by examining the comparable discoveries of an older compatriot of Popper's, the late versatile Austrian philosopher and sociologist, Otto Neurath. Neurath had occasion to consider the difficult problem, following the second World War, of controlling the textbooks suitable for use in the German schools, and in this connection he published in collaboration with J. A. Lauwerys his appraisal of the political tendencies of the *Republic*.⁹¹ It would indeed be presumptuous to doubt these writers' first objection to the book, namely: the dangerous use which, he foresaw, Nazi-minded educators might be expected to make of it. Such a prophecy had, as he acknowledges, the great security of experience behind it; for, as is well known, during the period that witnessed the rise of National Socialism, the *Republic* was more than once subjected to a "Nazified" interpretation.⁹² What concerns us more nearly is the agreement with Popper, on the part of Neurath and Lauwerys (henceforth for brevity referred to as Neurath), that the Nazi view is correct, that any fair reading of the *Republic* will reveal essentially an etherealized philosophical anticipation of the major abhorrent tenets in the Nazi creed.

To Neurath, Plato is "after all, a totalitarian reformer," callous to individualist values, to whom "the main purpose of the state is to preserve the purity of the race and to organize the people for war against foreign barbarians, who are to be looked upon as natural enemies."⁹³ This statement he documents very much as Popper has done in favor of his somewhat different thesis, by a gathering together of the scarce passages in which Plato takes account, without enthusiasm, of the necessity of war; by pointing to the existence of a specialized and highly trained class of warriors, which he does not fail to call a "caste"; and by dwelling on the importance which Plato attaches to the guardians' breeding, which for him, as for Popper, is a matter of "race." Having set forth Plato's "specific political plans" in this fashion, Neurath de-

⁹¹ The two articles referred to, by Otto Neurath and J. A. Lauwerys, are as follows: "Nazi Textbooks and the Future, II," *Journal of Education* (British), 1944; and "Plato's *Republic* and German Education," *Ibid.*, 1945. The appearance of these articles was followed by a lively controversy in the pages of this same journal, April-August, 1945, which came to my attention only when the present section of the book stood complete. Neurath and Lauwerys were answered first by G. C. Field, in a soberly persuasive article which closely parallels the point of view which we have maintained, and far less happily, in my opinion, by C. E. M. Joad. Among other defenders of Plato, John

Pilley of Wellesley College, U.S.A., subjected the positivistic assumptions underlying Neurath's and Lauwerys' attack to a penetrating critique. The two anti-Platonists, however, remained, on their own statement, "unrepentant and unabashed," and ended with the recommendation that at least Plato should not be set before young students on a pedestal.

⁹² Of this literature I am acquainted only with Joachim Bannes, *Platon, die Philosophie des Heroischen Vorbildes*, Berlin, 1935. Glenn Morrow, *Philosophical Review*, L, March 1931, p. 105, lists other works of this type.

⁹³ Neurath, 1944, p. 575.

clares, like Popper, that we must utterly distrust Plato's "lofty declarations." He doubts "whether Hitler would reject Plato's ideals," and urges us to observe the "many fine statements on the common good" in the official program of the Nazi party. He warns us to be on our guard against a writer whose work is full of "brutal, coarse, and undemocratic statements," who is, however, too often presented to us in fair disguise by persons in our midst who are attracted to him by their own private ambitions and subconscious longings; and we must take care lest, "more than we realize today," our youth be corrupted through Plato's pages.⁹⁴

We have thus in Neurath and in Popper two Austrian liberal thinkers, both of whom not only see in Plato a totalitarian reformer whose program is at one with National Socialism, but discover in him also an indirection and a speciousness which turns his idealism into a cynical pretense. To take these two complementary misconceptions in order, the identification with Hitlerism can be adequately explained if we observe the presence in the situation of three mutually reinforcing factors. There is, to begin with, the historical circumstance that both Neurath and Popper saw and suffered, under Hitler's temporary triumph, the shames and wrongs of a regime for whose principles the authority of Plato had been claimed. One may well ask whether it was

"Neurath, 1945, pp. 57-58 In order to show the conquering aim of the ideal state, Neurath cites the passage in which Plato is describing the "fevered city," from which the discussion of the ideal state takes off; this luxurious city, Plato says, will be compelled by its expanding wants to "cut off a parcel of its neighbors' land." In thus charging Plato's city with crimes committed before it was born, Neurath joins the company of Fite, who fell earlier into the same pitfall. We shall discuss the general question of the "militarism" of the Republic, pp. 566ff.

Neurath makes a point of Plato's recommendation that children who are to be warriors are to be taken out with the army to within sight of actual battles (466 E-467 E), and uses the metaphor of young hounds who are given a "taste of blood" to train them as hunters (537 A); this Neurath intensifies by making the children "very young" (Plato says "when they are sturdy") and by saying that Plato intends them to "develop a proper blood-lust," whereas there is no reason to suppose that more is intended than the necessary readiness to fight and to face danger. In Plato's deprecation of war against fellow Greeks and his calling of barbarians, by contrast, "natural enemies" of the Greeks, against whom it is

proper to wage war and to practice enslavement (469 B-471 C), Neurath, like Tarn and Popper, has seen only the reference to barbarians, and has interpreted this contingent and comparative approval of war against them by vast exaggeration as Plato's statement of one of the two chief aims of his state. Neurath also, like Toynbee and Popper, sees racialism in Plato's belief that, within a race, mental as well as bodily characteristics vary enormously and are inherited. An error less far-reaching but equally conditioned by preconceptions is Neurath's misreading of a Platonic passage (410 A), approving of capital punishment of "incurable" criminals (an idea frequently expressed elsewhere in Plato, e.g., *Laws* 862 E); in this Neurath, for understandable reasons, but with no foundation in the text, sees the sanctioning of killing mental defectives. With much greater accuracy Neurath points to the politic deception of the citizens regarding the marriage lots, and comments unfavorably on the censorship and generalized control from above of the citizens' lives. But where so much disproportion, distortion, and even downright error has gone into the making of a description, despite the presence of some truthful elements, we can deny truthfulness to the resulting whole.

possible to retain balanced judgment of the Platonic philosophy during those years when a subtly Hitlerized version of the *Republic* was actually functioning as a part of the symbolical machinery of Nazi rule.

Secondly, quite apart from the Nazi misinterpretation, there are actually parallels, despite the all-important differences, between the officially formulated aims of the Nazi party and the political ideals of the *Republic*. That such should be the case need excite no surprise if one refuses to allow the sensational nature of the issue to inspire partisan emotion; for it is notorious in politics no less than in chemistry that slight changes in ingredients and in the internal relations of the parts can produce sensationally different results. The nature and significance of the similarities and differences between Platonism and Nazism it will be our concern to treat at some length in our final chapter. Hypothecating upon the results of that discussion, we may here affirm, by way of example, that militarism and racialism, those baleful portents in the murky sky of Hitlerism, are simply not visible from the latitude of Plato's ideal city. But Popper and Neurath, in their concentration upon likenesses which are actually present, have not observed the differences, or have even distorted them into further similarities; and Neurath has carried the process so far that he has seen the closest kinship between Plato and the Nazi state as residing in the two qualities mentioned, which, on our view, are not present in Plato. To explain how this could happen, we may point by analogy to the psychological principles of "set" in perception, and of "closure," according to which an expected whole can be mentally constructed out of a minority of its known elements and perceived as if present in its entirety. Where all prior expectation and many details suggest the identity of Plato's picture with Hitler's, the interpreter may "hallucinate" what is needed to complete the outline; and this is apparently what Neurath and, in his slightly different way, Popper, have done.

But the supposition of Plato's duplicity remains to be explained. And here Plato's own declaration of his honorable, even his impracticably idealistic aims, combined with the historical situation, offer ample cause. Since Plato's detailed proposals have already been identified with those of Hitler, what can be more obvious than that his fair outward appearance is deceptive? And reenforcing the surmise thus aroused there was, in the historical situation, a prepared attitude of mind which confirmed it and added apparent probability to its unlikeliest development. The suspicion of hypocrisy, conscious or unconscious, in the political field, of sordid realities masquerading behind "lofty declarations," and more than this, the conception of a systematically planned program of deception, in the light of which both critics see Plato — this attitude, in its intensity and its accompanying sense of danger to our whole society, has been contributed to the study of Plato by the atmosphere of central Europe in the early decades of our century and by the events which followed Hitler's rise to power.

The existence of a widespread and contagious attitude of suspicion in the Vienna of those days can be shown by an example drawn from an unexpected quarter. It is really astonishing, after immersion in Popper's book, to reopen *Mein Kampf*, and to note the similarity in this particular respect between Hitler and his fellow countrymen, Neurath and Popper. Not far from the beginning of the book, Hitler records his discovery of the chicanery that underlay the "glittering phrases about freedom, beauty, and dignity" of the literature addressed by the Marxist-inspired Social Democratic party of Vienna to the "simpletons of the middle class," and the "lies and slanders" of the "brutal daily press," aimed by this same party to 'entrap the masses.'⁹⁵ A few more pages, and Hitler has detected the sinister racial origins of Marxism itself, has uncovered the aim of the Jews to dominate the world — the Jews, those enemies of mankind who write or speak "in order to conceal or at least to veil their thoughts; their real aim is not therefore to be found in the lines themselves, but slumbers well concealed between them."⁹⁶ These suspicions were not of Hitler's invention, but were seething about him in the atmosphere of Viennese politics.

And even behind Hitler, with his distrust of Marxists and Jews, rises a third rank of adepts in the detection of political treachery. The Marxist Social Democrats themselves, objects of Hitler's suspicions, were at one with Hitler and Popper and Neurath in their disbelief in the good faith of their opponents. As Hitler has reported, the Marxist spokesmen in the Vienna of his young manhood depicted "the nation as an invention of the 'capitalistic' . . . classes . . . the authority of law as a means for oppressing the proletariat; the school as an institution for breeding slaves and slaveholders"⁹⁷ — and the indictment was, he tells us, extended to include the entire sum of capitalistic institutions and ideals.

As the Marxism of the street-corner was thus everyman's teacher of suspicion, so, for the educated, the subtler and more intellectual Marxist conception of ideologies, arising out of and supporting systems of economic organization, cast doubt upon the disinterestedness of moral and political principles. Whoever still preserved the innocence of his understanding had also to confront the sociological relativism of Pareto, according to which ethical principles are mere "derivatives," that is, rationalizations of existing sentiments. More importantly, there was the new Freudian analysis which seemed to reveal moral systems as mechanisms of escaping into illusion from the menace of unconscious desires. And dating from the nineteen-twenties, there was a minority movement of which Neurath was a member and to which Popper owes a substantial debt, "logical positivism," which promoted the view that ethical propositions, being "noncognitive" and purely emotive, are neither

⁹⁵ *Mein Kampf*, translated by R. Manheim, 1943, pp. 41-43.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

true nor false; from this position, it is easy to show how grossly deluded have been all the great moralists. In the midst of such plots and counterplots, it would not be difficult to develop an illusory X-ray vision into the deceitful or self-deceiving soul of any political and ethical thinker, such as Plato, particularly after it had been accepted as proved that his proposals resembled Hitler's official program.

And as if this were not enough to damn Plato as a hypocrite, another shocking historical influence was added as a consequence of Hitler's accession to power and the unfolding of his career. Plato's principles having been equated with the theory of Nazism, his hypothetical practice, that is, what these principles would have come to had they been acted upon, could readily be identified with Hitlerism in action, as Neurath and Popper appear to have done. This interpretation is given color by its superficial resemblance to the method of "operationalism," which some logical positivists regard as the true criterion of meaning.⁹⁸ And as, admittedly, nothing in the original program of the NSDAP or even in the most frankly confessional passage of *Mein Kampf* gave adequate warning of Nazism's later demoniacal repudiation of the basic assumptions of common humanity, this has thrown the most civil implications back upon Plato. Suspicion has been confirmed, the validity of extending the merest hints of oppressive intentions into full-fledged inquisition has been proved; in the full energy of alarm and outraged humanitarian sympathy, "closure" is attained, and Plato is seen as Hitler in ancient dress.

In thus seeing in Plato's pages the outline of Hitlerism, Neurath and Popper are not alone. The same invitations to suspect, the same historical object lessons have been shared by us all, though not experienced with such intensity. Neurath and Popper are merely among the extreme examples of a reading public whose membership threatens to include virtually the entire class of liberal-democratic readers, as once, at the end of the eighteenth century, the Terror of the French revolution threatened to make anti-Republicanism coextensive with humanitarian scruples and belief in legal justice and decency. Today friendship for Plato is to be found chiefly among those scholars (and their friends and disciples) whose vision of him antedated the rise of Nazism, and thus remained clear of the psychic impurities and "conditioning" that we just now described. The reading of Plato has become a difficult art, requiring critical restraint and firm resistance to the lure of easy analogies and deadly historical parallels. But the difficulty is substantially reduced by the mere recognition of its existence. The real danger here is that of being taken unawares by an irrational suspicion of whose operation we are only dimly conscious.

⁹⁸ Popper's departures from the tenets of logical positivism, as established by leading members of the school, are not crucial

to the present discussion, but may be found *passim* in his notes to Part II of the *Open Society*, esp. p. 632 ff.

An egregious instance of the extravagance into which a suspicious approach to Plato can lead is found in the attempt to interpret him by means of Marxist principles made by Winspear and Silverberg. In *Who Was Socrates?*,⁹⁰ these writers have developed the hypothesis of the economic determination (and deterioration) of the thought of Socrates, who on this view was led, through the corrosive influence of his friendship with representatives of the propertied class at Athens, to renounce in their favor the fine democratic-mercantile sympathies of his earlier time. Accordingly, when the betrayed democracy had executed him, Plato invented, in his *Apology*, the speech that Socrates should have made (Winspear and Silverberg believe that Socrates actually made no speech at all), and in it Plato shows himself master of the hypocritic art: attention is skillfully directed away from the real charges, the suspicion of "being the head of an antidemocratic conspiratorial club" and of introducing the "militant" Pythagorean deities of "international conservatism." Socrates is made to appear to posterity, instead, as the victim of prejudice directed against him because of his being mistaken for a "democratic" sophist and materialist (our authors think Thrasyarchus and Anaxagoras great exponents of the "democratic" viewpoint). Plato's aim is "subtle"; he "deliberately confounds two quite separate things"; "he has done this with such success that . . . all the labors of scholarship have not served to extricate them"¹⁰⁰ — until, fortunately, Winspear and Silverberg achieved it; we remember that in Popper's book it was Popper who was required to uncover Plato's quite different villainy!

Thus Winspear and Silverberg supply another, perhaps the crowning example, of the wild work that can be made of Platonic interpretation, if one consents to follow the whispers of suspicion. Hypotheses are soon built, and, with the help of other often unnoticeably small *ad hoc* assumptions, easily "verified," rendered, as these authors say of their own interpretation, "necessary." But Nemesis awaits them in the persons of other no less malignly disposed interpreters whose suspicions happen to run in opposing directions. And so we may once more leave these Cadmean warriors to their fate of blind destruction at one another's hands, reflecting that suspicions which can thus project themselves adaptably upon the object are more the misfortunes of their possessors than valid indicators of actuality.

⁹⁰ A. Winspear and T. Silverberg, 1939.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 76-78. In holding that the *Apology* is a Platonic invention, our authors are building upon the thesis propounded by H. Gomperz and defended by Oldfather, discussed below on p. 632. Be it observed, however, that neither of these scholars has lent the sanction of his name to the notion that the author of the *Apology* was making dis-

honest propaganda, or in any sense distorting the fundamental issues involved.

Another example of modern sleuthing which supposes itself to have uncovered ancient deceptions and betrayals of noble causes — this time committed by Aristotle — is the book by Allendy described on p. 125, n.

But there remain still other persons against whom it is not impossible that suspicion may be aroused, chief among whom are (1) the friends and admirers of Plato, including our blessed selves, and (2) the suspicious detractors. As to (1), (2), in the persons of Popper and Neurath, have warned their readers to suspect all those who, like the present writer, essentially approve the philosophy of Plato. As Popper sees us, either we are the well-intentioned dupes of Plato, unconscious but dangerous carriers of the poison which Plato has slid into our souls (under this caption Popper apparently includes most modern commentators),¹⁰¹ or we are in some sense Plato's partners in crime, his fellow conspirators against liberal and equalitarian ideals, whom Plato has paid off in the small coin of flattery or won by his appeal to our baser motives. Popper is here thinking on the one hand of teachers, philosophers, and musicians, whose professional pride Plato has gratified by magnifying their functions,¹⁰² and on the other hand of the snobs and would-be beneficiaries of an unequal society whose claims Plato has so soothingly justified.¹⁰³ Among these, Popper and Neurath, too, have asked their readers to believe, are not a few in whose hearts Plato has awakened "secret dreams" of personal power and mastery over others.¹⁰⁴

The injustice of this wholesale calumny must not pass unchallenged. On its face, such a claim is largely unverifiable. Of the two lonely examples cited in proof of personal ambition, let Popper retain possession of his one show-piece, Nietzsche, whom reading of Plato undoubtedly reënforced in his dream of power. We may merely note that, as a matter of fact, it was Callicles, champion of nonmoral power, whom Plato rejects, and not Socrates, whom Plato loved, to whom Nietzsche's sympathies were attracted.

Popper is much more unhappy in his other instance. Some imp of the perverse inspired him to select from among Plato's admirers the late scholar and moralist A. E. Taylor, and to fasten upon him the fantastic charge of "hinting" (Popper sees "hints" easily in Plato, too, we recollect) that in England, in the year 1939, a true Platonist like himself, if given the opportunity, would have done what he could to install the Platonic Republic in place of the existing government. Evidence for this slur upon Taylor's motivation does not, properly, exist. On examination of the passage cited by Popper from Taylor's article, we find that Popper has simply transferred to Taylor a notion of Plato's that Taylor was expounding, as if Taylor had himself asserted it, with reference to Britain, in the year 1939! Taylor, remaining wholly within the context of the ancient Greek world, was recounting Plato's belief that men born into an "oligarchy" or a "democracy," but cherishing an ideal such as Plato's own, would, if good fortune gave them

¹⁰¹ Popper, pp. 43-44, 87-88, 103, 510.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 500, n. 39.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 191.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 152, 570; Neurath, 1945, p. 57.

power, seek to actualize at least in part the philosophic commonwealth.¹⁰⁵ Seldom, in our experience, has so microscopic a base of evidence been assigned the function of supporting so huge a superstructure of assertion. Taylor's remark dealt with a different topic, was applied to another age, was quoted as the opinion of another man. There is no proof of Popper's charge against Taylor, no proof of his ascription of dreams of power to Platonists in general.

Moreover, even had Taylor been in some way revealing an intention of his own, it is only on the principles of a rabid anti-Platonism that such an intention partakes of guilt. It is no crime to wish, or to be willing, to put what political idealism one cherishes at the service of one's country. Had Popper contented himself with the suggestion that so ardent a Platonist as Taylor, if returned to Parliament, would have sought to apply Platonic principles for the benefit of the British people, as Masaryk did for Czechoslovakia,¹⁰⁶ we should have accepted the suggestion and applauded the contemplated act. One could readily imagine Taylor urging educational equalization or introducing a bill for subsidizing political research, and quoting appropriate passages from the *Republic* by way of precedent. But such moderation is not at Popper's command. He is inviting his reader to think of Taylor as seeking to put into practice the complete program of the *Republic*, interpreted, moreover, as he, Popper, sees it — and that, we know, is a different matter indeed. The bare fact is that Popper is not here advancing an argument. He is merely spinning his vicious circle of suspicion, to Plato's hurt.

To discount the testimony of all friends and admirers of Plato, as Popper and Neurath have done, attributing it to their credulity or without evidence blackening their characters with charges of secret pettiness or ugly ambition, has the advantage of seeming to dispose of the otherwise embarrassing fact that many able men of undoubted allegiance to liberal principles have greatly admired Plato, an admiration which has been shared even by some of those who, like Crossman, have been compelled to dissent from Plato's authoritarianism and distrust of the common man. Write it down as another advantage of this tactic that it discredits in advance the efforts of all who may seek to answer. For who of us is prepared to present himself as the unerring embodiment of pure and disinterested Reason? The present writer does not claim more than an honest effort to see clearly and to present his evidence without suppression or distortion. By way of answer to Popper's implicit charge of secret pride or ambition, we shall appeal to a principle of civilized communication. Without for one moment seriously questioning Popper's and Neurath's right to present themselves as disinterested friends of liberal de-

¹⁰⁵ "The Decline and Fall of the State in *Republic*, VIII," *Mind*, 1939, p. 31.

¹⁰⁶ *Masaryk on Thought and Life*, Con-

versations with Karel Capek, 1938, pp. 72, 162.

mocracy, we will point out that they enjoy this status as a presupposition which they are under obligation to extend to their opponents who have entered a like claim. We may see in their pages or in the setting of their lives presumptive evidence that they have succumbed to the influence of a pervasive atmosphere of suspicion, or have been led to weigh evidence wrongly, by excruciating experience. We may even judge them totally incapable of serving as reliable guides to the interpretation of Plato, and may cite evidence and marshal arguments to prove it. But we must not without specific grounds accuse them of discreditable motives which are secret, and hence by definition unverifiable.

To return to Plato, our final statement must be that he has emerged from his ordeal unstained. We have with meticulous care examined typical cases of all Popper's charges, weighed his evidence, and tested his arguments. The imputations of conscious and unconscious guilt and struggle reveal themselves as no more than projections; the depiction of the imaginative symbols of Plato's deeply cherished beliefs as cynical propaganda has shown itself to be based on omission and distortion of evidence, and on preconceptions derived from false historical parallels. Of Plato's deceitfulness nothing remains but an honest proposal to make a limited use of deception for the higher communal ends. In view of this, the least that can be asked for him from his responsible contemporary readers is that they accord him the moral respect and supposition of good faith with which alone it is possible to read, justly and with good hope of essential understanding, a great, if sometimes, from our modern standpoint, greatly mistaken mind.

The Charge of Self-Aggrandizement and Lust for Power

To complete their "pathographic" analysis of Plato's soul, our analysts, Popper, and another who is now to reappear in our pages, Kelsen, have much to say of his feverish ambition and the fanatical certitude of conviction that supported it, traits so clearly incompatible with his reputation for judicial calm and philosophical indifference to common esteem, as to require a radical revision of the traditional view. The two unfavorable interpretations, though in broad agreement, are sufficiently different in detail to warrant separate treatment. We will give our first hearing to Popper.

Heretofore, in the interests of exposition, we have dealt separately so far as possible with the individual traits into which Popper has analyzed Plato. But if one is to receive the full import and impact of his analysis, one must combine these *dissecta membra* into the image of a single whole. Thus the tortured guilt and the cold-blooded guile, the impulse to exploit and at the same time, in some sense, to benefit the common man, must somehow be brought together by the reader within the framework of one personality, if the impression conveyed by Popper's book is to be adequately reproduced.

And into the same complex whole must somehow be worked a further trait or group of traits of a dark, discolored hue, which will justify us in applying to its functional totality the predicate pathological, if not outright insane. This element in Plato's makeup is, in its most generic aspect, exaggerated self-assertion, which expresses itself in a "lust for power," issues in extreme dogmatic certainty, and justifies itself by an all but megalomaniacal "claim to rule."

Of Popper's arguments supporting this charge, we shall deal first with his new and quite unsatisfactory interpretation of the "nuptial number" in the *Republic*. It will be remembered from our earlier discussion¹⁰⁷ that Plato makes the Muses, "jesting with us and teasing us as if we were children," describe this number in complicated and obscure mathematical language, and foretell that failure to know and to employ it in regulating marriages will one day pervert the eugenic practice of the guardians, with consequences fatal to the continued existence of the ideal state. We have indicated in the same place our general attitude to the vexed problem of the number; here we have no intention of clearing away the darkness that still surrounds the impregnable citadel of its (presumed) serious significance. What is contemplated is the much less pretentious task of expounding and evaluating Popper's reading of its meaning as evidence for Plato's desperate and either unscrupulous or, if sincere, deluded claim to power. We must follow the path of Popper's argument, which will lead us steadily downward from his initial rejection of the "idealized" conception of Plato, as the sober proponent of moral reform implemented by rulers possessed of philosophic vision, via the degradation of the rulers into medicine men and sham eugenic experts, to arrive finally at the identification of Plato himself with these rulers at their worst.

Popper tells us that the modest Socratic conception of the philosopher was radically corrupted by Plato, who ascribed to his philosophers definitive insight, and literally "supernatural" knowledge. The philosopher king is "not like other men." He is in the first place set apart from the common herd and confirmed in power by esoteric pseudo-wisdom. But he possesses also a practical political function, upon which depends the whole hope of permanent happiness, the recovery, never again to be lost, of the paradisiacal happiness enjoyed at the dawn of time, by the inhabitants of the first and best city, before the "Fall of Man"; this function is to keep pure the guardians' aristocratic blood, and to breed from among their descendants a race of supermen, forever guaranteed against degeneration. Under the administration of such breeder kings, Athens is to be reconstituted a replica of the primeval ideal city, imagined as the actual ancestor of the Spartan state, with the single but all-important addition of immunity to decay. The nuptial number, unknown before the "Fall," will be acquired by these new guardians as part of their

¹⁰⁷ See pp. 53-54 above. The passage is *Rep.* 545 D ff.

mathematical and dialectical training, and will enable them to fix the new city into permanence.¹⁰⁸

The number is, Popper believes, a determinate figure, known to Plato, though he may not have chosen to reveal it completely in his published page.¹⁰⁹ It is Plato's own invention, computed by the aid of the newer mathematical knowledge of solid geometry and harmonics, upon the basis of certain primitive Pythagorean superstitions concerning the numerical nature of reality and human happiness.¹¹⁰ It is designed to secure the permanence of that racial excellence which is shown by anticipatory references in important passages of the *Republic* to be regarded as a matter of desperate importance, worthy to constitute the central concern of the city's rulers.¹¹¹ And Plato, by his description of it and by his insistence that if it is unknown, the city cannot endure,¹¹² is obscurely recommending himself to his fellow Athenians as the only possessor of this practical key to ideal guardianship, which is to be theirs on condition that they shall summon him to be their ruler. Thus did Plato, as Popper holds him up to our derision, attempt to ply "the sorry trade of every shaman, the selling . . . of breeding taboos . . . for power over his fellow men."¹¹³

In an effort to break the spell of this coherent and even somewhat fascinating illusion, let us first attempt to conceive the state of mind of a man who, residing in the outskirts of Athens, seriously believed himself capable, at any moment, of beginning the swift and inevitably successful conversion of his native city into an eternal paradise. Could a man whose head contained so explosive a notion have kept quietly on the track of an academic and philosophic life, without confiding the results of his "research magnificent" to those who might be in a position to aid in its realization? Could he have refrained from forming a little committee of enthusiastic promoters? Is it conceivable that when the invitation to Sicily arrived he would not have given the idea a conspicuous place in his earliest proposals for reform, a fact which (even if the letters are not genuine) could hardly have escaped the attention of contemporary observers? Can one believe that throughout the length and breadth of his writings not a word of this unparalleled discovery can be found, save this one short passage in the *Republic*? In this passage, too, the number is by no means presented as an enticement, held out to prospective buyers with loud and confident insistence. Instead, it is introduced by the sportive and teasing Muses, as a means of explaining, by its absence, the fated dissolution of a city which has nowhere been plainly and unequivocally identified as a city of long ago; indeed, the very existence of this supposed proto-city has been so well concealed that its dissolution has

¹⁰⁸ Popper, pp. 81-83, 145-150.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 518.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 145, 150.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 148-150, 566-567.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 148, 520.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 150, 152-153.

for millennia been taken by Plato's readers to be the fated decline of a dream city of the future. Even the dissolution itself is spoken of exclusively in the future tense: "the rulers will not attain fortunate births", "the children will not be well born." Such tactics suggest an advertisement written in invisible ink, and would constitute extraordinary and self-defeating reticence in any shaman. Popper's hypothesis is thus seen to be initially unlikely in the extreme, opposed to all psychological probability and historical evidence, and unsupported by anything that Plato, in his other writings, proposes or describes as the functions of government, or the methods of eugenics.

If we now examine the grounds Popper has offered for his crucial contention that Plato believed himself possessed of such a number, we see that it rests first upon a series of inadmissible contentions basic to Popper's whole case. First of these is his conception of Plato's as dishonest, a conception which permits the ascription to Plato of almost any unproven beliefs and intentions; on this principle, it is always possible to reject what Plato says, and to search for "hints" and enigmatic revelations. It gives Popper, in effect, a fourth dimension into which he can escape when the time comes to produce evidence. It permits him in dealing with the number to brush aside Plato's explanation of the essential purpose of the guardians' higher education, to substitute his own discreditable analysis of their functions, and to add elements of which Plato never speaks; it also enables him to explain, as intentional concealment, the obscurity with which Plato describes the computation of the number itself. Colored and supported by the concept of dishonesty are further general theses: the notion of the aboriginal, proto-Spartan, ideal city which Plato, without openly admitting it, is describing throughout most of the *Republic*, and the belief that Plato secretly intended the immediate realization of the reconstituted city at Athens with the existing Athenian oligarchs and *demos* frozen into inviolable castes. We have already dealt with these general misconceptions, except that of the primeval city, the disproof of which, since it turns upon the consideration of vermiculate details, may, in spite of its importance to Popper's case, be relegated to an Appendix.¹¹⁴

But before leaving this topic we must not fail to walk once around the monument that Popper has erected here to Plato's naivete. For Plato is represented as believing that the first city, in the full sense of the word, which ever existed upon this earth, was a civic structure elaborately complete with its three ordered classes of rulers, warriors, and workers equipped with an educational system comprising the two branches of music and gymnastic, nourished upon a highly edifying mythology and literature which ascribed no evil to gods or to good men, permitting to its guardian group no property and no emolument beyond subsistence, and displaying in approximate form

¹¹⁴ See Appendix X which argues in disproof of Plato's supposed conception of a primeval best state pp 612ff

all the other features of Plato's city of the *Republic*, as described in Books III and IV. Besides the manifest absurdity of this elaborate primitivism, we may mention a logical difficulty. Popper has told us that "Plato had a fairly clear idea" that the first and best city had originated when the Dorian "war horde" marched triumphantly into a "city, previously founded by the tradesmen and workers," and imposed themselves as masters upon a "settled population."¹¹⁵ The city which resulted—the perfect city—is for Plato, so Popper believes, the earliest embodiment of the Idea of the City.¹¹⁶ Of what lineage, then, was the city or the settlement which was thus overwhelmed?

But the main absurdity entailed by Popper's supposition is the truncated time schedule on which it assumes that Plato's parochial mind was operating. For if at the time he wrote the *Republic*, Plato regarded his aboriginal perfect city as the immediate progenitor of the Spartan and Cretan forms of government, this would set an interval of not more than a few thousand years (probably much less) between it and Plato's own day. No longer ago than this, then, Plato must have believed, there had existed upon this earth an almost unblemished perfection, embodied in the primal city. Assume it to have endured unchanged for other millennia preceding its decay, still, since it is the "first" city, it must reach back to the time of man's first organized association in cities.

Plato, then, for Popper, believed all past time numbered by a handful of millennia. We invite Popper's attention to Plato's statement in the *Theaetetus* (175 A), a dialogue he has himself suggested may antedate the *Republic*, that, as the philosopher well knows, every man now living is descended from "unnumbered thousands" of forefathers, among them rich and poor, kings and slaves, Greeks and barbarians.¹¹⁷ We cannot agree that there is reason for assuming the *Theaetetus* earlier than the *Republic*, yet neither can we believe that Plato, when he wrote the *Republic*, should be suspected of believing the origin of time distant by but a few scores of millennia. There is no reason to suppose that between the *Republic* and the *Theaetetus* Plato first discovered time's immensity. Was not the philosopher of the *Republic*, too, the "spectator of all time and all existence" (486 A), a phrase sufficiently vast in its implications? If Popper has recourse to his suggestion of a serious Platonic belief in epochs,¹¹⁸ and would argue that it is the beginning of the present epoch which Plato believed thus recent, he will be involved in other difficulties. For he has argued that Plato's best city is the first embodiment in time of its Idea, one of the products of that contact of the Ideas with time at time's start, and of their paternal operation to produce as their first

¹¹⁵ Popper pp 498 51 55

¹¹⁶ *Ibid* pp 28 30 41

¹¹⁷ That Plato means thousands in direct line (father grandfather great grandfather etc.) not the thousands quickly achieved

by the spreading increase of the powers of two is clear from his reference to a twenty fifth and a fiftieth ancestor

¹¹⁸ Popper pp 22 23 47-476

barn offspring nearly perfect material copies, which forms part of his interpretation of the Platonic metaphysics and the very basis of his belief that Plato's perfect city is also Plato's notion of the earliest city.¹¹⁰ The moral of this fable would seem to be a *caveat* against underestimating the intelligence of your adversary, especially if your adversary happens to be Plato.

There remain, however, Popper's arguments dealing more immediately with the number. It is, Popper argues in sum, vital to the breeding program, which is in turn vital to the welfare of the city; it is based upon the very mathematical knowledge with which Plato proposes to equip his guardians; Plato plainly implies that it could, if known, be employed to obviate the city's decline, and Plato himself, though obscurely, announces its formula. Surely, he would have made it the cornerstone of his new edifice!

This chain of reasoned error could be cut at many of its links, but we may begin with pointing out its major weakness: It neglects, or rather denies, a fundamental tenet of the Platonic philosophy, the necessary corruptibility of all things that share in generation. Popper is aware of Plato's adherence to this belief, even of Plato's reassertion of it as affecting the ideal city in the very passage concerning the number,¹²⁰ yet, in some fashion not made clear to the reader, he has convinced himself that Plato did not mean the corruptibility to apply to the perfect state, and that with the one addition of a scientific breeding program, this state will, if reconstituted, escape decay — apparently in perpetuity.¹²¹ This fundamental violation of Platonic first prin-

¹¹⁰ We shall discuss Popper's analysis of the Platonic theory of the Ideas on pp 627ff

¹²⁰ *Timaeus* 52 A provides another statement

¹²¹ Popper, pp 81-82 Popper's belief that for Plato "the perfect, the 'natural' state" can have no necessity of dissolution, his insistence (p 520) that Plato could not conceivably have spoken of it as "a thing of human generation" appears to be closely connected with some of his other misconceptions of the Platonic philosophy. Thus it is probably no accident that Popper also thinks of Plato as a political "holist" who attributes no independent value to the individual human being, and locates all value in the state, it is in consonance with this that Popper supposes Plato to have set the state above and apart from all other mundane beings and structures. On an earlier page (p 38), engaged in expounding the Platonic theory of ideas, with its teaching that all material copies of the ideas partake of mutability, he has gone so far as to add the words "except perhaps the most excellent ones," thus providing without textual

justification a little niche for the perfect state as he conceives Plato to regard it. Popper has failed to take account of the fact that it is the human soul alone which Plato has thus set beside the World All and the gods, as a creation, indeed, and not, like the eternal forms, in essence incorruptible, but as having been created by the Demiurge himself, deathless and everlasting (*Timaeus* 41-42, 69 C). The state, it is true, is not in the *Timaeus* mentioned along with the mortal and corruptible beings created by the junior gods. But the absence of any specific exception in its favor is notable. This being the case, its status, sufficiently indicated even in the *Republic*, as a mere earthly copy of its form or idea, suffices to classify it among the things generated and subject to corruption, even if the Muses did not specifically declare it thus corruptible. Plato's hope and desire of stabilizing and preserving to the utmost whatever is excellent in the world of flux have led him in the *Laws* (960 B-E), under the audacious figure of irreversible Fate, to speak as if his well founded state were destined to endure. In

ciples is but another consequence of that initial neglect of the Platonic philosophy as distinct from political theory which has made possible so many of Popper's misinterpretations of this political theory itself.

If signs of life remain in Popper's serpentine argument, after this fatal objection has taken effect, we are willing to destroy *seriatim* or render harmless its surviving segments. First of all, we may agree that the eugenic function of the guardians, though quite different from Popper's conception of it, is to Plato of the greatest importance, and that he deems it vital to the continued existence of the ideal city.¹²² But this alone does not prove that there is

the *Republic* (424 A), he even looks forward, once the city is established, to a continuous cycle of improvement, an upward development in human and institutional excellence; in the *Laws* (769-770, 951-952, 962), he is hopeful of including among the city's institutions one which will provide for cautious future improvements, even perhaps for radical transformation closer to the ideal.

But we must remember Plato's lively awareness of the uncertain element in human history, the recurrent fires and floods and pestilences which have so often in times past hurled man backward into barbarism (*Timaeus* 22 C, *Laws* 677 A), not to mention those lesser vicissitudes which are of commoner occurrence (*Laws* 740 E-741 A). It would seem, therefore, that when Plato allows himself to speak in terms of an apparently unbounded "historical" future, one must assume that he has appended the tacit proviso, "barring contingencies." Popper's exemption in Plato's name of the ideal state from corruptibility is related intimately also to his treatment of Plato as a "historicist," a mistaken view treated obliquely in our App. X, pp. 612ff., and confronted directly in App. XIV, pp. 622ff.

¹²² In his endeavor to show the great significance of the number passage and to strengthen his thesis that in it Plato reveals his own claim to serve as philosopher king, Popper has asked us to see it as the culminating member of a series of passages in the *Republic* which voice Plato's great concern with "race" in the special sense of racial exclusiveness, and reveal Plato's belief that good breeding consists entirely in keeping certain noble racial strains uncontaminated with base infusions of lower-class or degenerate blood (Popper, c.g., pp. 81-82). On pp. 119-150 and 566-567, Pop-

per lists these passages, claiming as racialistic the plea (*Republic* 470 ff.) that Hellenes shall not war on or enslave one another, but only barbarians, and seeing the same racialism in the great sentence (473 C-E) which declares that until kings become philosophers there shall be no cessation of evils for the "human race"; a "bridge" is discovered in the passage (536 A-B) which prescribes that fit aspirants to philosophy must be "true-born," not "cripples" or "bastards"; all these "foreshadow" the number, which is to prevent the entry of racial impurity into the guardian class. We have already removed most of these passages from Popper's racialistic series by arguments presented on earlier pages. That the philosopher-king sentence speaks universally of the human race has been argued on pp. 230f.; we have presented on pp. 172f. reason for believing that, in the passage on war and enslavement, the note to which Plato's sympathy is attuned, and on which the emphasis is placed, is the recommendation of mercifulness toward Hellenes, while the sanctioning of harshness toward barbarians is only incidental, representing an uncorrected survival from the widespread Greek attitude toward enemies of either sort. On pp. 201ff. we have already commented upon the passage concerning "cripples" and "bastards," in the course of discussing Antisthenes, who was at that point in Popper's argument supposed to be the personal target of Plato's remarks; it was then shown that these apparent terms of prejudice or abuse are used in a purely figurative sense, to describe persons unevenly balanced, "loving toil," as Plato puts it, with either body or soul, but not with both. The passage has no reference to any particular person, nor has it racialist bearings: though Plato undoubtedly would consider the qualities of

any reference to the breeding program in those passages elsewhere in the *Republic* in which Popper has detected it, or that Plato believed himself possessed of a magically efficacious nuptial number. Next, the fact that the guardians are to have mathematical knowledge of the sort involved in Plato's description of the number does not prove that they will also possess the number. It is well to observe that in Plato's text, no one is credited with knowing it except the Muses. "The rulers whom you have educated," the Muses say, "will not for all their wisdom hit upon fortunate begetting and barrenness for your race", their powers of "reasoning combined with sense-perception" will not forever avail, but "in ignorance" they will permit the begetting of unworthy and unfortunate children. Even if we assume for the moment that "the rulers whom you have educated" are, in fact, Popper's imaginary Ur guardians, Plato has said at the most that they did not possess the number, he has not asserted the contrary of the mathematically educated guardians of Popper's supposed second city. If we believe, on the other hand, that Plato describes but one ideal city, and that the guardians referred to are the fully trained philosopher kings, we have the simple assertion that even they will not attain it.¹²³

body and mind to which he refers to be largely hereditary, this does not mean that he is thinking of them for the moment as hereditary, or that he ascribes their presence to "purity" of blood, as we shall argue on pp 535ff. As regards the number passage itself, we shall show similarly that the racial excellence which Plato says will fail and by its absence bring about the downfall of the city, is not "racialism" in Popper's sense of the word. In short, of Popper's series three passages are not, properly speaking, "racial" at all, the fourth proves genuine racial interest, but of a different kind.

¹²³ Throughout this discussion I am maintaining the view that it is the number of which the guardians are to remain ignorant. The Greek seems to imply this (546 C-D), reading 'the number . . . is master over . . . better and worse births, and when, in ignorance of these, the guardians unite brides and bridegrooms inopportunately,' etc. Nevertheless, I am prepared to grant the possibility, though it seems to me scarcely probable, that it is not the number which will be lacking that the guardians' *logismos*, reasoning or calculation, will be adequate, and will on this supposition include knowledge of the number, whatever it may represent; the error will arise from false observation of particulars, from *aisthêsis*, a

faculty which in the Platonic theory of knowledge is radically liable to error. Whichever alternative one adopts, the consequences are the same: the guardians will commit the inevitable mistake, the snake will find its way into the garden.

Popper advances the argument, set forth on his pp 81-83 and 518-520, that guardians equipped with the modernized higher education which Plato is planning to provide will not be liable to the error of which the Muses speak, since they will not be limited to the faulty "empirical method" which for Popper is conveyed by the phrase "calculation (or reasoning) combined with observation" (*logismos met' aisthêseos*), and will not be compelled to "hit, accidentally" (Popper's italicized translation of *teuxontai*) upon the method of getting good offspring, but will have at their disposal a "purely rational method" (Popper, p 82). We may point out first that Popper's emphatic phrase, "hit, accidentally," is not a necessary interpretation of the Greek, which could equally well mean "hit, by aiming at" or simply "obtain." Even more surprising is the notion that mathematically trained guardians could be conceived by Plato to dispense, in their supervision of marriages, with *aisthêsis* or observation. For in all activity relating to the material world, "particulars" are indispensable, and "particulars" are derivable

Deserving of more serious consideration is Popper's next argument. The Muses assert that since the guardians are ignorant of the number, the city must inevitably be destroyed, and in so saying seem to imply that knowledge of it would suffice to avert this catastrophe; the city's destruction is not, therefore (or so it appears) unconditionally determined. But consider: the Muses have already told us that since the city is of the class of things which are generated, it must inevitably pass away. We are not at liberty to construe the statement about knowledge or ignorance of the number in such a way as to contradict this categorical assertion. And precisely as in the first case it is not implied that the city might somehow cease to be a thing of generation, so in the second there is no implication, and indeed no logical possibility, that the number, if it is indeed capable of averting destruction, might pass into the class of the known.¹²⁴

from the universals which alone reason can supply, no more for Plato than for modern logic.

It is true, as Popper has been at pains to point out, that Plato in prescribing the higher education of the philosophic ruler (*Rep.* 523 ff.) bids him leave behind the region of sense perception and mount to lay hold on essences alone, thus to become a "true reckoner." This is the upward pathway from the cave of Plato's metaphor. But there is the downward pathway also, by which the guardians are compelled to return from the heights of reflective reason and confront the actual world, that they may accustom themselves once more "to observe the shadowy things" of sense (520 C), and "may not fall short in experience" (539 E). In another metaphor, the "painter" of the ideal city or character looks off to the heavenly model, but must again direct his eyes upon his work (501 B).

That Plato did not suppose that observation, *aisthēsis*, despite its limitations, was dispensable, appears again in the *Phaedrus* (271 D-272 A), where discussing the conditions under which the knowledge of rhetoric may become effective, he affirms that after the types of discourse applicable to different men and occasions have been learned, the student must also be able to recognize these persons and occasions by observation (*aisthēsis*). Again, near the end of the *Laws* (960 E ff.), engaged in justifying the institution of the Night Council which is to serve as the "savior of the laws," he ascribes the preservation of every living being to its "mind and senses" or "reason and observa-

tion" (*nous mei' aisthēseōs*) (961 D), and explains that the elder and younger members of his Council are to exercise respectively these two functions on behalf of the state (964 E-965 A).

In short, in the passage about the number it is proper to read the Muses' phrase *logismos mei' aisthēseōs* as Plato's expression for rational scientific method (in the modern sense of "scientific"), the best available combination of human faculties for dealing with the world of experience and material fact. It is this which the Muses say will not suffice to save the guardians from eventual error.

¹²⁴ Cf. our note 123, p. 456 above. If the number is known to the guardians, and if, therefore, their blunder is occasioned by ignorance of another sort, we are required merely to believe this other ignorance equally inevitable.

But Plato's reference to the guardians' ignorance may be explained in yet another way. If one supposes that neither knowledge of the number nor any other human skill or accuracy can avail to save the city, and that decline will inexorably begin when the cycle or period of fertility and barrenness for human creatures, of which the Muses speak (cf. p. 53), shall have turned through its appointed orbit—on this supposition, the ignorance of the guardians is brought in simply as a piece of dramatic irony: all unaware of the futility which attends their efforts, on that unhappy day they will continue to do their conscientious best, alas! without effect.

The final argument from the fact that Plato himself is obviously able to state the formula of the number, and therefore must himself possess the knowledge, though to be sure he ascribes it only to the Muses, is an instance of the loss of aesthetic distance which deceives the spectators in the theatre into believing the scene literally, not dramatically, real. If a character upon the stage declares aloud what he asserts no one except himself will ever know, does the existence of the author and the spectators belie him? Whether or not Plato has given directions capable of yielding a definite number,¹²⁵ — if knowledge of the number would avert decay, does he not make the Muses declare it will remain unknown?

But it is time to make an end of refutation and to combine our previous scattered suggestions into a summary statement of an alternative interpretation clear of the difficulties under which Popper's hypothesis labors. Whatever the actual number in itself may or may not be, it is functioning in this passage essentially — we would say exclusively — as a dramatic device. It symbolizes those inevitable and uncontrollable forces or powers beyond human wit or wisdom, operating on a periodic principle worthy of what was to Plato this mysterious but mathematically ordered universe, which are scheduled in the end to overthrow the mightiest and fairest structures of human contrivance. As we read the passage, nothing of significance for our purpose hangs on the identity of the number, or upon what units of time or of genetic com-

¹²⁵ The chronic disagreement among scholars as to the identity of the number persists, despite A. E. Taylor's hopeful prediction ("The Decline and Fall of the State in *Republic*, VIII," 1939) that it would be brought to an end by the solution of Dies (*Le Nombre de Platon*, Paris, 1936, cited by Taylor). Still in the field though somewhat damaged by adverse criticism, is the double interpretation which Adam has given (in his notes and Appendix on *Republic* 545 C), discovering first an embryological number, 216 and second a cosmological number, 60⁴, or 12,960,000, which is taken to indicate days, and, assuming Plato to have counted 360 days to the year, is read as 36,000 years, this in turn is interpreted in the light of the *Politicus* myth, as the supposed duration of the world's half-cycle, as it moves from better to worse and conversely Dies has argued in favor of a single number, identical with Adam's second number, or 60⁴, and this is taken by Taylor, *op. cit.*, to represent the number of years, 36,000, in which would be accomplished the entire declension of the perfect state into tyranny. Then there is Brumbaugh's assignment of genetic significance

to the mathematical expression or diagram — hardly a number in the usual sense — which he detects in the passage (see Appendix XI below, pp. 616f.) That Plato should have had some determinate number in mind as he wrote the speech of the Muses seems to me likely on any conceivable hypothesis. Even a "painted dagger" must share with its more substantial prototype certain particular qualities of size and contour, if it is to perform the illusory function devolving upon it. One can imagine Plato starting with a number chosen partly, like the number 5040 in the *Laws*, for its facile factorability, and partly for its astronomical or other cosmical associations, and proceeding to involve it in the pomp and obscurity required by the character of the speakers (the Muses) and the nature of the occasion (a prophecy of doom). That Dies' inquiry (and Adam's in part) should lead to the number 60⁴ makes possible what is to my mind a happy compromise between the "occult significance" and the "merely literary" schools of interpretation. See our suggestion of the number's "meaning," in our text, immediately below.

binations it enumerates. It may even be, one may say, no more than a package so artfully and significantly wrapped that we are content, and Plato's purpose is served, even though it should turn out that nothing whatever remains after the last wrapping has been removed. All that is necessary is that the transience of the ideal state should be oracularly announced,¹²⁶ and that its corruption should be traced to the loss in native perfection of its rulers.¹²⁷

We are not required, therefore, to believe that Plato conceived himself possessed of esoteric number wisdom and that he thus announces himself as the indispensable man, the uniquely qualified philosopher shaman. From our portrait of Plato we may happily delete one more disfiguring trait.

If Plato did not try to purchase a position of power with the counterfeit coin of a breeding taboo, had he no other grounds on which to rest his claim? Popper believes that he had, and that a Lyncean reading of the dialogues will leave readers in no doubt as to their nature: Plato was obsessed by the conviction that by virtue of his descent from the Athenian aristocracy, he possessed the right to rule. The evidence for this, Popper has ferreted out from the dialogues, pointing first to Plato's celebration of his maternal lineage, in the *Charmides* (and again in the *Critias*), as a disclosure of his pride of race.¹²⁸ The same trail leads on into the *Republic*, where Popper notes as significant the assignment of the exclusive right to rule to the master caste, the

¹²⁶ Plato's manner of introducing his myth of the number, which we are asked to imagine as being told to us by the "Muses," "playing with us . . . as if we were children" and speaking "in lofty, mock-serious, tragic style" (trans. Shorey, Loeb Library), finds a striking parallel in the *Sophist*, 242 C-E, where various pre-Socratic theories of being are about to be passed in review. Of the authors of these theories, who have spoken in fanciful metaphors and have not troubled to make their meaning clear, Plato says, "Every one of them seems to me to tell us a story as if we were children," and he presently refers to two of the rival sects, the Heraclitean and Empedoclean, as "some Ionian and Sicilian Muses." What may we validly infer from this close similarity? Perhaps two consequences emerge: (1) In speaking of "Muses" in the number passage, Plato has in mind a conflation of earlier thinkers, blending together for his purposes their cosmological speculations and mathematical fore; Empedocles and Pythagoras suggest themselves. (2) From the parallel passage in the *Sophist*, and from *Theaetetus* 180 E, we know that Plato deprecat- ed oracular obscurity in seriously-intend-

ed metaphysical doctrines, since it produces confusion in the minds of listeners, whether or not it indicates a similar lack of clarity in the mind of the thinker himself. Plato's own use of high-flown and obscure language in the number passage, therefore, implies that his intention is not wholly serious, and that his reference to those earlier thinkers is somewhat ironical: when impressive obscurity is what is wanted, they are the ones to call upon! And on topics which are beyond human wit—when myth alone can aid us—such impressiveness is all that can be asked. So, at least, I would interpret this parallel.

And finally, it is interesting to note that Plato's use of the Muses as symbolic agents of possible deceit can be traced back as far as Hesiod's *Theogony* (ll. 27-28), where the Muses are made to say: "We know how to speak many a falsehood like unto truth and, when we so wish, to tell the tale of truth."

¹²⁷ Another recent interpretation of the Platonic number, by R. S. Brumbaugh, is discussed in our Appendix XI, pp. 616f.

¹²⁸ Popper, pp. 22, 475.

guardians, and the corollary concern for keeping pure the blood of the guardians, which for Popper is almost the central motif of the *Republic*, the end and aim of the secret racialism which Plato was so "hesitant" in bringing forward, and for the sake of which alone so called "philosophers," as distinct from soldier administrators, were required as kings. Expressive of the same spirit of exclusiveness, Popper finds, are those passages in the *Republic* where "bastards" and "bald headed tinkers" are scornfully rejected in favor of the "true born" aspirants to philosophy.¹²⁹ When the Socrates of the dialogue explains how a small number of elect souls have been preserved from the prevalent corruption, Popper's ear discerns a more personal note, indeed a reference to Plato himself, in the mention of a "certain nobly born and well bred character who was saved by flight" (or "by exile")¹³⁰ from involvement in the politics of his native state. When Plato presently urges the possibility that his ideal state may be realized in at least one instance, if a single descendant of kings or "aristocrats" (Popper thus renders *dynastai*), having been born with a philosophic nature, should escape corruption, Popper again detects a personal reference, since Plato's family, on Popper's special interpretation, are describable as "*dynastai*." From this it is but a step to his climactic discovery in the *Republic*, that the famous sentence concerning the philosopher kings is, again, Plato celebrating Plato. For when this sentence declares that philosophers must become kings, or failing this, that "those who are now called kings or rulers" (*dynastai*) must genuinely and sufficiently become philosophers — here too, in the word *dynastai*, Plato reveals that he is thinking of just such members of aristocratic families as himself.

How shall we separate and distinguish the elements of undoubted truth in the just stated theory from the fabric of error in which they are interwoven? We may first refer the reader to our earlier discussion of the *Charmides* and the mingling there displayed of family pride with something that we may almost call apology. It is not denied that Plato would have liked to take satisfaction in the high standing of his family, as he doubtless had done in his boyhood, and that after its disgrace in the time of the Thirty he liked to hark back, in his dialogues, to the days when it still stood high in public esteem, to stress its connection with Solon and its other honorable distinctions, and to show that his subsequently disgraced kinsmen had once enjoyed the friendship of Socrates. This degree of family pride does not prove a haughty racial exclusiveness. In the *Republic*, we shall categorically deny that there is any intent to distribute power on the basis of descent, or, in the usual acceptance of the term, to keep "pure" the guardian breed.

The passage referring to the "nobly born and well bred character" saved by flight or exile (496 B) comprises a listing of the several influences that

¹²⁹ *Ibid* pp 149 561-562

¹³⁰ *Ibid* p 568 The reference is to *Rep* 496 B the translation given is Popper's

might preserve a man for philosophy. It enumerates the "divine sign" of Socrates and the ill-health of Theages, and in addition mentions three typical situations which would be similarly effective. If Plato has here provided one category in which he himself could properly be included, that would not be matter of surprise, still less of scandal. He may, however, have thought of himself as belonging to that small group who, as he says, "by natural affinity" are drawn to philosophy "from other arts which they justly disdain"; accordingly, there is no certainty that he has referred to himself as "well-born." That he did not think "good birth" in the usual sense prerequisite to inclusion among the small remnant of the saved is plainly shown by the identity of its chief member, Socrates.

One of Popper's most gratuitous conjectures is the discovery of reference to Plato himself¹³¹ in the philosopher-kings sentence, which we herewith reproduce for convenience of reference:

Unless . . . either philosophers become kings in our states or those whom we now call our kings and rulers (*dynastai*) take to the pursuit of philosophy seriously and adequately, and there is a conjunction of these two things, political power and philosophic intelligence, while the motley horde of the natures who at present pursue either apart from the other are compulsorily excluded, there can be no cessation of troubles, dear Glaucon, for our states, nor, I fancy, for the human race either.¹³²

To begin with, Plato is already sufficiently included in the first clause, among philosophers; there is no need, in order to prove him a claimant to kingly power, ingeniously to insert him into the alternative clause which follows. Secondly, we must point out with emphasis that Popper's interpretation breaks down the symmetry and even the sense of Plato's sentence. The two specified conditions for the realization of the ideal state must be in equilibrium: "until philosophers become kings" (i.e., actual rulers) must be balanced by a clause meaning "until actual rulers become philosophers." And to interpret *dynastai* in the second clause, as referring to hereditary aristocrats who, like Plato's family, were among the politically unemployed, is literally to strike the bottom out of Plato's meaning. Examination of the later passages reaffirming the central meaning of our sentence, two of which Popper cites as again employing the words *dynastai* or *dynasteia*, will show that if Plato's meaning is not to be violated, these words must in these contexts signify rulers actually entrenched in power.¹³³

¹³¹ Popper, p. 568.

¹³² Rep. 473 D, trans. Shorey, Loeb Library.

¹³³ The passages in question are *Republic* 487 E, *498 E, *499 B, 500 E, *501 E-502 A, 536 A-B, *540 D-E, those marked with an asterisk being the ones in which the words *dynastai*, *dynasteia*, or *dynasteuō*, occur. It is not denied that the words *dynastai* and

But Popper has still further surprises in store for us; wilder things are yet to come. We have heard much of Plato's claim to power, both as author of the indispensable breeding number and as member of the hereditary ruling class. Now Popper offers us an additional claim, wholly unprecedented in the literature of Platonic scholarship and reading for all the world like an excerpt from the case history of a megalomaniac: Plato was reaching for "the power which he thought his due," as "descendant and legitimate heir of Codrus the martyr, the last of Athens' kings who, according to Plato, had sacrificed himself 'in order to preserve the kingdom for his children.'"

What possible foundation in Plato's text supports this dizzily baroque fabric of interpretation? In that portion of the *Symposium* in which Socrates is reporting the wisdom of Diotima, there is reference to the desire of noble fame as the motive prompting those who went to their deaths for others' sakes, as Alcestis did for Admetus, Achilles for Patroclus, and Codrus to

and also *Laws* 711 D, where the substance of the philosopher-kings sentence is restated.

We may answer here two more footnotes in which Popper (p. 569) further supports his charge that Plato in the *Republic* reveals his personal ambition to become king of Athens. In the *Politicus* he detects "a revealing self-reference" in the statement (292 E-293 A) that the sole criterion of true statesmanship is possession of the appropriate knowledge: "the man who possesses the kingly science, whether he rules or not, must be called kingly, as our previous argument showed" (trans. Lamb, Loeb Library).

We shall discuss on pp. 496-498 the general question of Plato's conception of himself in relation to political knowledge. This particular passage, however, so far as it is supposed to constitute a special personal revelation, can be more easily disposed of. Much evidence converges on the probability that the historical Socrates and his associates pursued definitions and drew distinctions between real and apparent law, power, justice, and the like (cf. *Gorgias* 469 C ff., real power; *Apology* 40 A, the true judge; *Republic* Book I, 331 C ff., the true ruler). And Xenophon reports, not incredibly, that Socrates had made the very distinction found in the *Politicus* (*Mem.* III, ix, 10): "He affirmed that kings and rulers were not those who held scepters, nor those who were elected by any chance persons,

nor those who obtained power by lot or violence or deceit, but those who possessed the science of ruling." This type of reasoning was indeed implicit in the Socratic search for the man who knows, the expert. It is not Plato's invention, and cannot be employed to "illuminate" Plato's psychic state.

Popper's next discovery is Plato's statement in *Laws*, 704 D-E, that only "a mighty savior and divine lawgivers" (trans. Bury, Loeb Library) could preserve from luxury and depravity a city situated on fine harbors on the seacoast — as Athens was in fact situated. Popper begins by translating tentatively, converting the "divine lawgivers" into one "superhuman legislator," and then reads the passage as "an indication that Plato had once dreamt of becoming the philosopher king and savior of Athens," and is now explaining away "his failure." Such a search for hidden motives prompting Plato's remark is superfluous; plain reasons lie at hand. Plato tells us in this very passage, and confirms it elsewhere, that in his opinion commerce above a certain necessary minimum is promotive of greed and luxury, and sea battles destructive of manly courage and discipline. If anyone's "failure" is being explained away, it would be more plausible to suggest that of Solon and the other framers of the earlier Athenian institutions, whose laws, good though they were, had not been able to preserve Athens against such odds.

preserve the kingdom for his sons.¹³⁴ The choice of persons cited was plainly determined by one single consideration: their value as classic instances of self-sacrifice. To see in the introduction of Codrus into this context the personal motive of reminding Plato's Athenian readers of his kingly prerogatives is to offer violence to a passage whose moral and spiritual atmosphere transcends the personal and the mundane, and, *a fortiori*, the calculations of political effect. And if it be suggested that the allusion to Codrus is not a deliberate but a subconscious revelation of Plato's fanatic dream of power, our answer must take the form of a warning to the critics against the irresponsible use of so dangerously two-edged a weapon, which is likely to cut more deeply into the hand of him who "taketh it up" than into the body of the intended victim. Plato's many hundreds of pages contain hundreds of names, from Cronos to the younger Socrates; among them the name of Codrus occurs but once, and in a context where it is objectively relevant. If one must apply the methods of psychoanalysis to the understanding of Plato's dreams, one should observe its prescription of drawing no conclusions not supported by frequently recurrent themes.

We approach now the veritable climax, in which the last full measure of Popper's devotion to his fanatical effort to prove Plato a fanatic is made manifest. Popper has abstained from a full-length and direct statement of the charge, which, indeed, is so shyly and obliquely put as to remind a reader of Popper's own description of a guilty Platonic hesitation. And yet there is no possible doubt of the meaning intended: Plato believed himself to be potentially the very hinge on which the portals of History would swing open to admit the millennium; he conceived himself as the destined lawgiver whose moral insight and mystic knowledge of the "number" would literally bring to a close the hemicycle of the world's downward motion and inaugurate a

¹³⁴ Popper's interpretation demands that the sons for whom Codrus died should be construed as including the entire line of his descendants, running down the centuries to Plato and his collaterals. This receives no support from the legend, as supplied by the scholiast *ad loc.*, according to whom Codrus had two sons, Medon and Neleus, the former of whom actually inherited his father's rule, while the younger became the founder of "twelve-cities Ionia" (and, we may add, was traditionally the ancestor of the Codrids in Ionia, mentioned in Bury, *History of Greece*, 1931, pp. 81-82, 168-169). The context, indeed requires that Codrus' act of sacrifice, like that of Alcestis, should have an immediate relationship to some person or persons in whose behalf it was tradition-

ally supposed to have been performed. There is a small anomaly, tangential to our issue, in the inclusion of Achilles, since it is hardly true to say that Achilles died for the sake of Patroclus: at most one could say that loyalty to Patroclus prompted him to return to that war in which he ultimately met his death; but the specific personal relationship is undoubtedly present in Achilles' case. Codrus' act, furthermore, was no private tradition hardly known outside of Plato's immediate family. It was generally accepted and acclaimed in Athens, as shown by the reference to it in Lycurgus, *Against Leocrates*, 81-87, and might have occurred naturally to anyone engaged in listing famous instances of self-sacrifice.

return of the golden age, in which change would be abolished and the primal perfection would be itself again.¹³⁵

It will be sufficient refutation of Popper's view to show that in all three of the major political dialogues, Plato makes clear his belief that throughout the foreseeable future, change will remain a permanent element in human affairs. Thus in the *Republic* (424 A) he ventures the prediction that the establishment of the ideal community could become the starting point of a cycle of favorable changes, better nurture and education producing men who, in turn, are able to produce offspring better than themselves. The city must also at long last decay. In the *Politicus* (294 B), it is denied that even the best conceivable code of laws could forever retain their fitness to their sphere of application, "for the dissimilarities both of men and actions, and what may be termed the absolute unrest of human things, suffer no art whatever to lay down in any matter any simple rule which shall be applicable to all cases for all time."¹³⁶ And in a notable passage in the *Laws* (951 B) Plato has, as it were, refuted in advance all suggestions that he regarded himself as the one and only indispensable legislator, whose enactments must stand unaltered to all time. The well ordered state, we are told, must not

¹³⁵ This charge, like the idea that Plato considered his descent from Codrus a valid claim to rule as king of Athens, appears for the first time in the revised edition of Popper's book. Popper's belief in Plato's sanity has diminished in the intervening years.

It is possible that Popper has wished to answer critics of his argument that Plato maintained the necessary superiority of all that is past, and with this in mind has sought by his additional hypothesis to reconcile Plato's supposed belief in the steady decay of all excellence in the present epoch, with the obvious fact of his effort to establish reformed states or even his hope of an ideal city, in the future. This hypothesis is developed by stages, of which the first consists in giving serious weight to Plato's mythical picture in the *Politicus* of alternating ages of decay and ages of gold, and supposing further that Plato believed the period of his own lifetime sufficiently depraved to make it ripe for the cosmic reversal (Popper, pp 22-23). The next step is to assert, "Plato may well have believed that . . . the advent of the cosmic turning point would manifest itself in the coming of a great lawgiver whose powers of reasoning and whose moral will are capable of bringing this period of political decay to a close", "it is likely" that Plato's belief in

this function of the lawgiver in restoring the age of gold, which could know no change, is expressed in the *Politicus* myth (pp 23-24). Then, on a later page (p 38), discussing Plato's supposed belief that in the current epoch increasing corruption infects all human souls with almost no exception, Popper adds, "Plato mentions the possibility that 'a soul gifted with an exceptionally large share of virtue can . . . become supremely virtuous and move to an exalted region'." The problem of the exceptional soul which can save itself — and perhaps others — from the general law of destiny, will be discussed in chapter 8." Now Popper's chapter 8 is entitled "The Philosopher King," and contains his revelation that Plato is himself this exalted being, and that he claims by knowledge of the mysterious number to have the power of counteracting the general law of destiny, thus Popper asserts, it will be remembered, without reservation. The two premises now unite, and we see that Popper is asserting without any attached "perhaps" that Plato believed himself to be the destined man for whom the world was waiting.

¹³⁶ Campbell's translation, *ad loc*. This recognition of the necessity of revising legislation does not stand alone, cf *Laws* 769 D-E, cited on our p 507.

remain in ignorance of "the doings of the outside world." It needs such knowledge, not only as an example of avoidance and for confirming the sound elements in its own legislation, but in order "to amend any that are deficient." For "amongst the mass of men there always exist — albeit in small numbers — men that are divinely inspired; intercourse with such men is of the greatest value, and they spring up in badly-governed states just as much as in those that are well-governed." As Socrates in the *Phaedo* had denied his own irreplaceable uniqueness,¹³⁷ so here, whether or not Plato would in some sense include himself in the small number of the divinely inspired, he is so far from identifying himself with the embodiment of unalterable wisdom that he is willing to subject his own political constructions for ultimate confirmation and improvement to the insights of these gifted men. Such an expectation is in complete contradiction to the fantasy of a cosmic lawgiver under whose magical hand the world will be transformed into the perfection of immutability.

But it is time for us to leave this wonderland of impossible surmise and return to the realm of historical probability. Plato did, beyond question, regard himself as able to speak with authority on the great questions of moral and political reform. He may, for an occasional moment of exaltation, have trespassed briefly upon divine assurance, but he habitually pauses to confess that both he and those for whose benefit he is speaking fall short of the divine perfection. Thus in the *Laws* (853 C), contrasting himself and his fellow lawgivers, and their prospective citizens, with the "sons of gods" of the golden age, he says, "We are but men, legislating for the seed of men," and again, as the immediate prelude to his cosmological flight in the *Timaeus* (29 D): "I who speak and you who will judge my words are but of mortal nature."

The critics of Plato have not contented themselves, however, with discovering in his works specific justifications of his right to rule; these are seen as part and parcel of a general demand for recognition and authority, expressive of the deepest nature of the man. Behind and lending urgency to the claim based on the nuptial number and upon royal descent, Popper discerns a personal ambition, a sour, despotic authoritarianism.¹³⁸ It is presumed as underlying Plato's oligarchic inclinations, and as making use of that "fundamental benevolence" whose sincerity, in some sense, we have seen that Popper is willing to grant, as further ground for his right to impose his will. His dishonesty and self-divided deceitfulness were in the interests of this same ambition.

Popper invites us also to remember the kindly genial way that Socrates had with the young men who followed him, and his constant endeavor to lead

¹³⁷ *Phaedo* 78 A, quoted on p. 231 above.

¹³⁸ Popper, pp. 150-153 and notes.

them through unrestricted discussion of basic ethical concepts along the open path of individual development; in contrast he underscores Plato's haughty disdain, the sour distrust displayed in both the *Republic* and the *Laws*, by the ban upon free discussion of philosophical topics with the young.¹³⁹ Tending in the same direction are Plato's restrictions upon the freedom of artistic expression in which Popper finds him guilty of legally imposing his own likes and dislikes upon the community at large.¹⁴⁰ He is shown as denying what Protagoras and Socrates (it is said) so clearly saw, that questions involving moral values are not matters of absolute knowledge, but depend upon the free exercise of personal decision; in consequence, Plato retained possession of a dogmatism which served as a certificate for inflicting his own will upon others.¹⁴¹ And for general psychological underpropping of his charge that Plato's soul panted after power, Popper has appealed to Kelsen's earlier-mentioned monograph, "Platonic Love."¹⁴²

We have already in another connection considered this psychoanalytic study of Plato, the homosexual, whose attitude toward society was basically determined by an ambivalence arising from his inner sense of guilt, a retreat and rejection balanced by a desire to dominate and to serve. This conflict, as Kelsen sees it, found its ultimate sublimation in Plato's pedagogic program with its theoretic extension into government. The central relevance here for the understanding of Plato's personality is the accent on domination. The theory purports to explain, almost without residue, the reputedly objective, theoretical, disinterested philosophy of Plato, in terms of an abnormal psychic condition, one of whose major manifestations is the quest for personal power. In the process of illustrating and defending his theory, Kelsen has made a number of acute observations mingled, as we shall hope to show, with much cavalier imputation, a procedure that sets a difficult problem for one who wishes to do simultaneous justice to him and to Plato. The chief points in his analysis are these:

Plato's dominativeness, though springing from its own root in the deep soil of Plato's being, was directed and mightily strengthened by an outside force. It may come as something of a shock for a reader of Popper to learn that this force was named Socrates, that modest and self-effacing inquirer, pledged to the defense of the intellectual freedom of others. What Kelsen sees in the bearer of this name is a man whose ruling passion was "the urge to dominate," a "bourgeois" who had forced his way by sheer strength of will and intellect into the highest stratum of Athenian society, where he spent

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 132, and notes.

¹⁴⁰ Popper, p. 54 and notes, esp. p. 502.

¹⁴¹ Popper's thesis that a belief in the objectivity of moral truth leads to intolerance is conveyed chiefly by his extravagant praise of Socrates, who supposedly (see our p. 300) had announced "critical dualism"

as his personal creed and had derived from it his all-embracing tolerance of the views of others. See, e.g., Popper, pp. 128-131, 62-67, and, for Plato's use of his dogmatic "spiritual naturalism," p. 78.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 570; for our previous discussion, see pp. 100ff. above.

much of his tireless energy in the mere process of humbling and lowering the aristocratic youth and those who were his competitors for their admiration, the sophists. This does not preclude a heroic element in his thought, the conviction that an absolute norm of justice exists, though beyond his power to demonstrate.¹⁴³

At this point the task of summarizing Kelsen's rapid and elliptical argument becomes a serious responsibility. But what Kelsen seems to be saying is that in the very act of thus affirming the existence of an absolute standard of justice Socrates exhibits the urge to dominate. Particularly in the doctrine that "virtue is knowledge" both Socrates and, at least, the younger Plato display an altogether exceptional will to power. For no intelligent person could have believed, against all experience, that knowledge alone can determine action, that is, that knowledge possesses coercive power over the will of its possessor. What the formula expresses is the assumption that there is no knowledge worth the name save that which is serviceable to the end antecedently determined by the will. This will to virtue, then, tacitly replacing the intellectually unknowable absolute norm, claims as of right the conditions of its own fulfilment, inflicting upon others, under the name of "knowledge," whatever opinion is required to validate its own ungrounded claim to authority. In reality, Kelsen asserts, "a pure and true knowledge" cannot serve as "the basis for virtue. The will as will to power, however, needs a legitimatization, and finds it in the idea that to master men means the same as to better them, to change them from evil to good. . . . In consequence virtue must be transferable from master to mastered . . . must be knowledge, must be teachable." And so the Socratic right to teach is justified.¹⁴⁴

This Socratic identification of virtue and knowledge was taken over by Plato, but not, Kelsen tells us, without significant modification and enlargement. Plato had emerged from the struggle with his own sense of unworthiness by the process, recorded in the *Symposium*, of learning to accept both himself and the actual world as a mixture of good and evil capable of movement toward the ideal. Thus set free and strengthened, he rose to the full measure of his capacities, vastly exceeding, in emotional energy and in will to power, the "stunted" Socrates, who remained "stuck in pedagogy." Plato, aspiring to the government of men, and unwilling to accept the positive law of the state as the ultimate political justice, adapted the Socratic formula "virtue is knowledge" to the purposes of a "preacher of justice," and a "prophet of the ideal state."

Some points in the argument thus far presented require our immediate attention. What must one say of Kelsen's assertion that the Socratic formula "virtue is knowledge" is conceivably nothing more than an attempt to lay

¹⁴³ Kelsen, pp. 77-80.

¹⁴⁴ Kelsen, pp. 81-83.

the foundations of a dictatorship over the beliefs and actions of others? It would seem that Kelsen is so deeply entrenched in what may be called his positivistic voluntarism, his belief (if we understand him correctly) that virtue can be based only upon private acts of will, that he is simply incapable of imagining how an intelligent ancient could have believed knowledge alone capable of determining the will, unless because his desire to dominate misled him.

This plainly passes by the commonsense possibility that Socrates, at the beginning of his career, should have felt a genuine need of finding an external rational ground for the guidance of his own conduct. In the historical circumstances this was precisely what was expectable of so intelligent a man. The sophists, by their claim to teach "virtue," had already implied that virtue is a kind of knowledge. What could be more natural than the determination to find another kind of knowledge capable of validating "virtue" in the deepest and highest sense, i.e., the improvement and perfection of the soul, which for Socrates was the highest good for man (*Apology* 29 D-E)? And the knowledge under pursuit, as the ally and servitor of the soul's interest, could be counted upon to move a will already committed to that sovereign good. Whether the hoped-for results of this quest should be put to any use beyond self-direction was an issue undetermined by anything in the quest itself and thus falls outside the import of the Socratic equation of virtue and knowledge. Even the teachability of the knowledge sought, assuming its discovery, had not been left for Socrates to assert. Our conclusion then must be that the Socratic search for a teachable knowledge which could underprop virtue, and the Platonic claim to have found it, arose as responses to the challenge of the intellectual environment, and were in their origin not dictated by the distinctive psychic structure of either man; the identification of knowledge and virtue thus loses all value for the very purpose for which Kelsen has invoked it.

If, as seems to be the case, Kelsen is also maintaining that anyone who believes in the existence of objectively knowable moral truth has revealed the authoritarian structure of his soul, then one may say that Kelsen has the evidence of the greater part of history against him. Certainly this is true of Greek ethics, with its notoriously teleological character. Let us note two conspicuous examples: Popper's much-magnified individualist Antisthenes could on this theory be proved an authoritarian; and a like fate would overtake even the gentlest association of Epieurean friends, who, reclining on the tender grass, are fondly imagining that they have learned from the master of the Garden the knowledge of nature and of man in the light of which they pursue the true virtue of tranquillity.

After expressing this major disagreement with Kelsen, we may begin to list our qualified agreements. That Socrates was no mere dutiful incarnation of the voice of God, but was sustained in the exercise of his extraordinary

energy and ability by a lively enjoyment, is confirmed by all the evidence. Doubtless, too, he welcomed the tribute of admiration, especially from the golden youth of whom Kelsen speaks, and valued the warmth and jollity of an occasional symposium. For Plato one could tabulate a suitably adjusted schedule of greater and lesser satisfactions which combined with the hope of furthering his more ideal aims to motivate the activities of his life. But these concessions do not require us to join Kelsen in finding Socrates' primary motivation in the pursuit of victory over other persons, or Plato's in a fantasy of political power. Kelsen has in no way justified his selection of these as their respective dominant motives. If Kelsen's choice is based upon the inadequacy of his psychological principles to supply a basis for the understanding of personality other than self-interest or the operation of purely self-centered urges, we shall suggest at least a possible alternative below.

On one important point we can emphatically assent to Kelsen's view. This is his awareness that if Plato is to be convicted of dogmatically asserting the absolute validity of moral principles on the basis of which he was prepared to undertake the direction of other men's lives, guiding them educationally or governing them, then Socrates must share to some extent in the condemnation. For Kelsen has correctly seen that the thought of the one was but a development and extension of the other's. And the skepticism of Socrates, his refusal to admit that he possessed knowledge, must not be permitted to obscure either his constant presupposition that such knowledge can and must be found, or his fundamental affirmation of principles already known to him, which he believed central to the conduct of life, both for himself and for other men, could they but be persuaded to adopt them.

As corollary to this agreement with Kelsen, we may consent also to attribute to both Socrates and Plato the desire for dominance over men. But we must stipulate a use of the term "dominance" which Kelsen does not centrally intend, though on occasion his use approaches it. "To influence others helpfully and from a position of superior insight" is an approximation to what is meant. Any one who considers himself able to help others, possessed of a point of view which it would benefit them to adopt, claims at least a limited superiority; to make the effort to win them to its adoption is then to attempt domination. In this sense, Kelsen and Popper, despite their denial of objective validity to the moral values which they uphold, join with Socrates and Plato and the myriad other champions of significant human causes in a common motivation which we may hail as admirable while we deny that it is peculiar or abnormal. Plato, it is true, was willing at least in theory to go further, and to assume responsibility for planning a community which should exemplify the values which he honored. The degree of blame attaching to this willingness we shall later attempt to assess.

But to complete our report of Kelsen's argument: In further confirmation of his thesis that Plato was dominated by the desire for power, Kelsen draws

for us the picture of Plato as a would-be tyrant, on the deepest level of his personality fearing his own ruthless impulses should he attain power: the Callicles of the *Gorgias* is Plato's symbol at once for Critias, whom he feared to become, and for his rejected inner self. Plato therefore in the *Gorgias* renounced politics and chose philosophy.¹⁴⁶ But in the *Republic*, conditionally reversing his choice, he made passionate appeal to his native Athens to let him serve her as her ruler. And here he reveals naively his utter certainty of his own rightness, presupposing as self-evident his philosophy as the foundation of the state, and imagining himself as the only possible ruler, from above, over even the philosopher kings themselves. He shows no awareness of the difficulties in the way of the realization of the ideal state, for is not the uniquely qualified man at hand? Nor, once established, will it go to ruin, for he obscurely reveals his knowledge of the nuptial number. He even divulges to his intended protégés his proposal to lie to them for their own good and thereby unconsciously renders his own project unworkable.¹⁴⁸

In the *Politicus* and the *Laws*, Kelsen discovers, if anything, clearer and more emphatic evidence of Plato's hypertrophied will, declaring that Plato shows no recognition of the value for all men of freedom of personality, as such.¹⁴⁷ And finally, the Syracusan experience is displayed as Plato's vicarious adventure in political power, with Dion simultaneously in the characters of his *inamorato* and his other self. Thus we are shown, through Dion's deterioration from philosophic ruler to red-handed tyrant, the calamities that must befall when the fantasies of Platonic philosophy become vested with actual political power.¹⁴⁸

We are now ready to consider Kelsen's evaluation of Plato's will to power as distinct from that of Socrates. We may be excused from further comment upon Kelsen's presentation of the *Symposium* as marking a crisis and a turning-point in the fever-chart of Plato's self-condemnation, since we have already given our reasons for doubting the correctness of Kelsen's diagnosis of extreme homosexuality.¹⁴⁹ But in any case it remains to determine how far Kelsen can be followed in his conviction that Plato's subsequent life and thought were basically directed by his "will to power."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Kelsen, pp. 89-94.

¹⁴⁷ Kelsen, pp. 94-103.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 103-105.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 105-110.

¹⁵⁰ See pp. 113ff. above.

¹⁵⁰ One point in Kelsen's interpretation of the *Symposium* bears directly on Plato's supposed love of power, and may be mentioned here. Kelsen maintains (pp. 76-77) that even in this dialogue, Plato makes "intensely personal avowal" of his passion for dominance by declaring, through the mouth of Socrates, that the noblest offspring of the spiritual Eros are the proper ordering of

states and households, and such achievements as the laws of Solon and Lycurgus. Now, as the reader will see by reference to the dialogue (209) or to our p. 91 above, these spiritual products are said by Socrates to be attainable by souls which rise only to the level of the "lesser mysteries." Above them (210-212 A) Plato sets the ascent to the vision of ideal Beauty and the true virtue and bliss which are the offspring engendered thereby in the soul of the beholder. In the *Symposium*, therefore, Plato exalts philosophy above power even such as Solon's. By his failure to make this clear in

It is not wholly irrelevant to note a certain ambiguity — one might say “ambivalence” — in Kelsen’s evaluation of Plato’s supposed love of power. On the one hand there are indications of approval; it is the *ground*, as we have seen, of a contrast, to Plato’s advantage, between “the narrow confines of Paideia,” to which Socrates was restricted by his personal deficiencies, and “the wider realms of Politeia” in which alone Plato, whose “dimensions were greater in every respect,” could “gain his satisfaction.”¹⁵¹ Yet Kelsen also presents it as a distortion of personality resulting from a psychic malady, scarcely a trait worthy of commendation either in a philosopher or in a man. Combining these two views, we reach an apparent contradiction. Knowing Plato’s defect, should not Kelsen in all reason have deplored any attempt on his part to pass from Paideia to Politeia? To escape contradiction, there is, as we see it, only one answer that Kelsen can give. He can say to Plato: “I approve only your aspiration to govern men; I deplore the assumption upon which you approach power, namely, that it is possible to know the good and to impart it from master to subject. Go ahead and rule, only don’t attempt to justify it in terms of ultimate human good.”

To this we may reply on Plato’s behalf that to Plato a mandate to govern without commitment to a schedule of values would have appeared the equivalent of tyranny or unprincipled demagoguery, and that he could only have regarded Kelsen’s suggestion with pious horror. There is tragic irony in this situation, with its implication of radical disparity between two outlooks upon the responsibilities of power. We cannot attempt anything like an adequate account of the difficult problems to which it gives rise, though a little later we shall have something to say on the subject. But this collision of convictions makes clear how little justice one does to a political attitude like Plato’s, with its deepest roots in an ethical and metaphysical theory, when one attempts to measure it by a standard such as Kelsen’s, which is unable to do anything with Plato’s first principles save to reduce them to symptoms of a psychic malady.

No one need dispute Kelsen’s right to revive, with modern psychological improvements, the old idea that the character of Callicles in the *Gorgias* is in reality a portrait of Plato’s one-time paradigm, his uncle Critias, and hence (herein lies Kelsen’s innovation) a portrait of Plato’s rejected self. Such intuitions, though from the nature of the case indemonstrable, are enlivening and may be said to possess at least a species of analogical truth. The danger is that the vividness of the analogy may so captivate the imagination as to efface the memory that the “self” in question was fought against and rejected, leaving only the impression that an intimate relation, perhaps even an identity, has been established between the real Plato and his supposed antithe-

his discussion of Plato’s yearning for power, Kelsen has represented as highest in Plato’s regard that which Plato, on the con-

trary, has expressly relegated to a lower plane of value.

¹⁵¹ Kelsen, pp. 83-86.

sis. This is what we found Kelsen doing with the picture of the tyrant in *Republic IX*, and most of what we wrote in that context is applicable here. It is not sound to identify Plato with those of his characters whom he abhors, while neglecting his affinity for those, like the "apolitical" Socrates and the philosopher kings who unwillingly descend, whom he approves.

The postulate that the real meaning of a psychologically emphatic rejection is simply the rejector's own basic attraction to the thing he denounces, leads to a choice of evils. For if it proves that all generous opposition, as, for example, to Hitler in our own day, rises out of an inner tendency to emulate a Hitler, still it does not help us to understand why, in a given person, this inner tendency is rejected and transformed into a force for good. Or if, by interpreting all a man's strenuous rejections of evil into evidence of his kinship for this evil, it turns into hypocrisy or self-deception all his corresponding enthusiasms for good, it leaves us no excellence to be admired in any ardent soul and condemns us either to cynicism or to the admiration only of indifference and stolidity. It appears wiser to rise from these underground chambers and to argue that Plato in the *Gorgias* has shown not his suppressed longing for power, but his rejection of power misused, and that in the *Republic* he has accepted not power, but power employed for approvable ends. Again, as in the case of Eros, Kelsen has failed to observe that Plato has demonstrated two species where Kelsen has seen only an ambivalence.

That a man of Kelsen's acknowledged acumen should have failed to respect the principle of perspective in literary art, may seem surprising, yet in his reading of the *Republic* he has been led — apparently by his zeal to penetrate Plato's hidden meaning — into just such an error, in more than one respect. In an obvious sense, Plato is of course present on his own stage, sharing his every belief with the Socrates who is his mouthpiece. Granted, too, that Plato has endowed his philosopher kings with all the wisdom he himself possesses; granted even that in some sense they are, as Kelsen insists, a collective portrait of the artist (and we must add, of Socrates as Plato conceived him). Even so, Plato must not be conceived as one or more of the characters in his own play, knowing and doing all that he ascribes to them. Just as we have seen Popper assume that the Muses, when they describe the nuptial number, reveal Plato's own knowledge of its identity and use, so Kelsen makes the same unnecessary assumption that Plato is himself the Muses. Kelsen goes on to imagine that Plato has put himself on the examining board of those who select the future rulers and on the committee for controlling marriages; Plato has given himself, too, the task of telling the assembled citizens the myth of the metals. Is it so difficult to see that if the *Republic* was to be written at all (and Plato was not the first to compose such a work,¹⁵² he would have to describe the institutions of the ideal state? And

¹⁵² Hippodamas and Phaleas, Plato's predecessors in describing ideal constitu-

tions, are discussed by Aristotle, *Politics II*, 7, 1266 ff.

if it was to be vivid and delightful reading, the choice of an imaginary founding of the city "in words," by Socrates and his young companions, was a happy device, in line, moreover, with the common Greek practice in the establishment of a colony.

Given this approach, the fact that the city was to be absolutely ruled does not in the least affect the degree of authority assumed to be possessed by the framers of its constitution; for if Plato had set out to found a democracy, complete with a bill of rights, he could equally well in his book have imagined Socrates figuring as lawgiver, and could through him have enacted that its constitution should be held inviolate, particularly in this matter of civil liberties, thus arrogating to himself—or so it could be said—supreme authority over the otherwise all-powerful citizens; and in describing the conduct of this democratic government, Plato could be charged with imagining himself electing officials, handing down judgments, and making administrative decisions. By placing the government of his imaginary city in the hands of a small self-perpetuating minority, Plato does show his belief that such power would be beneficial, and to this extent proves himself able to sympathize with and to identify himself with absolute rulers. But why must we disregard, or with Popper, treat with scornful irony, his assertion that they will rule reluctantly, in order to escape the evils of being ill-governed and because of the obligation imposed upon them by their rearing? For it is mere cynicism to deny that this is an integral part of the role with which Plato sympathizes. It is true, as Kelsen says, that Plato believed an ideal state could be established only upon the assumptions basic to his own philosophy, and this we shall discuss below. But here we must ask the reader to note one further blindness in Kelsen's interpretation. If Plato's failure to provide any realistic means of transition from actuality to his ideal state can be construed as his simple offer of himself to be its architect, and if, moreover, his open avowal of his proposal to use deceit for the good of its citizens can be interpreted as his naive and self-frustrating revelation of his dream of power, both can also be read as indications that Kelsen is mistaken in believing that Plato had any expectation of installing the Republic at Athens, with himself as its deceitful ruler.

Kelsen's strictures upon Plato's political thinking and doing after the period of the *Republic* need little comment here. Of Plato's relation to Dion we have had our say; how far the *Politicus* and *Laws* justify Kelsen's talk of "will-less puppets" pulled about by a "godlike philosopher" is considered elsewhere in this book with reference to the method and aim of these two works and, in the case of the *Laws*, to the social arrangements proposed;¹⁵³ to the

¹⁵³ In introducing the *Politicus* as expressing Plato's reluctance to restrict "the truly wise, royal sovereign . . . by any kind

of constitutional laws" (Kelsen, pp. 103-104), Kelsen has combined accuracy with misdirection. For while it is perfectly true

imputed motivation we shall shortly devote further attention. We may remark again that the semblance of will-lessness is imparted to the citizens described in these two dialogues largely by the exigencies of their literary birth; as we observed in the case of the *Republic*, since Plato is writing a description of an ideal community in its cultural entirety, his general procedure must be to represent its members as abstract vehicles of his cultural ideal. He does, significantly, explicitly recognize in the *Laws* (746 A) that no concrete persons could become such "citizens of wax" as he describes. We may enter one further objection: that Plato's oppressiveness was "unexampled," either in the cruelty of the prescribed penalties for crime or, with reservations, in his religious enactments, may be doubted in the light of our discussion, on earlier pages, of Athenian practices,¹⁵⁴ to which Kelsen seems to pay too little heed.

In the course of the preceding discussion we touched now and again upon the edges of certain large assumptions that were serving our critics, apparently, as general grounds upon which their specific criticisms reposed. Let us deal more centrally with these, as perhaps the best immediate preface to our reading of Plato's personality relevant to his claim to authority. The first

that Plato urges such immunity for his ideal Statesman, it will be remembered from our discussion, p. 349, that this Statesman is rather a norm than a man, and that in his absence reliance must be placed upon the "second-best," which we found Plato so earnestly recommending to the Sicilians, government according to law. In other words, so far from constituting an endorsement of rule by the "free judgment" of an individual ruler, the *Politicos* is preponderantly a plea for a "government not of men but of laws," a government into which Plato would recommend the introduction of as much genuine knowledge of political relations as the community is able to procure. Kelsen, p. 103, has also fallen into the error which we have pointed out and attempted to set right in Popper's case, in n. 133, page 462 above: when Plato declares the possessors of the science of kingship, and them alone, to be true kings, whether they rule or no, Kelsen supposes that Plato is simply asserting his own claim to rule, despite his unfortunate lack of present power. A conception arising out of another man's thought (that of Socrates), inspired, moreover, by the highly impersonal ideal of framing logically adequate definitions, can hardly be simplified into a mere expression

of inner urges.

In earlier discussions of the *Laws* (pp. 353, 464-465) we noted that the legislative expert of that work, the Athenian Stranger, with whom Plato clearly wishes to be identified, is not presented as omniscient or all powerful. We have acknowledged our dissatisfaction in the face of the overly regulative constitution he proposes (see also below, pp. 549f.). But we must also in fairness call attention to the provisions Plato has made for securing to his citizens personal participation in the community and individual rights, mentioned elsewhere in this book, as follows: to vote and hold office (pp. 330-331, 514-515); to sit as judge (p. 525); to appeal unwelcome decisions (e.g., p. 534); to have the rationale of the basic laws clearly and publicly explained (pp. 525-526); to hale offending officials into court (p. 561).

¹⁵⁴ See pp. 351f., 355f. The stringent criticisms directed by Bowra (see our note, p. 307 above) against the "ruthless punishment" and general repressiveness found in the *Laws* are in partial accord with Kelsen. We ask the reader to consider the rights and wrongs of Bowra's case, also, in the light of these same pages in our text, and of pp. 550f. and 560f. below.

of these assumptions figured in the discussion of Plato's conception of virtue and knowledge. It is the repudiation as logically untenable and even pernicious of what we shall call for convenience, "moral dogmatism," or the belief that moral truth can be and has been in all essentials discovered, and that it is actually known to the person who proclaims it, for instance, to Plato. Must we assent to this condemnation? ¹⁵⁵

For my part this is one of those questions best dealt with by contemplating the results that would necessarily follow from assuming an affirmative answer. If moral dogmatism has always been the pernicious thing that our critics seem to see in it, which of the great ethical and religious systems would escape whipping? The skeptics, relativists, and nihilists, and in addition the critical dualists of our own times, would alone remain as approvable movers of human history, against the dead weight and outright opposition of the proponents of other modes of thought. But this is to forget that man has struggled up the long trail of his cultural development almost always with

¹⁵⁵ Popper's own position of "critical dualism," or the "dualism of facts and decisions," described on his pp. 60-67, has already been mentioned, pp. 293 and 300. It involves the assertion that the moral life must rest upon free decisions, based upon a knowledge of facts but not derivable from them. Moral standards are creations imposed upon nature, not derived from supposed facts such as "man's spiritual nature" or the "will of God." At the same time, Popper feels himself entitled to insist that the substance of these decisions is by no means arbitrary; they are highly important choices, for the proper making of which "we are responsible"; further, they may be made with the aid of "faith," and "because of your conviction that it is the right decision for you to take" (p. 66). Since he has, thus, a foot in either camp, Popper has the not inconsiderable advantage of denouncing as a "spiritual naturalist" any particular disapproved thinker who believes it possible to know that certain ethical decisions are, or are not, in accord with man's spiritual nature, while himself claiming at will the support of any religious believer who can be interpreted as grounding his firm belief upon an act of choice.

But this tactical advantage is won at a cost; critical dualism, consistently maintained, must abandon any claim to apply to basic moral decisions such predicates as "right" and "wrong," and can attach no ethical meaning to talk of our "responsibility." It reveals itself as impotent to con-

demn the momentous "decisions" embodied in the collective actions of any group, e.g., the Germans under Hitler, except by appeal to other "decisions" for which no greater objective validity can consistently be claimed. In spite of Popper's dissociation of himself from the positivist position, it appears that an essential kinship remains. (For a recent instance of the positivist inability to condemn Hitlerism on grounds other than those of expediency, see Richard von Mises' *Positivism*, 1951, pp. 338-339 and 365-366.) The critical dualist asks us to abandon moral dogmatism in favor of a standpoint which, in spite of his good intentions, lends itself with equal facility to a high ethic of universal humanity, or to moral nihilism—if one so decides! Meanwhile, an intermediate position (that to which the present writer adheres) can easily drop from sight, a view well expressed and defended by Morris Cohen (*Reason and Nature*, 1931, pp. 446-449), according to which we may assume an absolute norm and engage in active quest of it, while nevertheless entering no dogmatic claim that at any stage of the inquiry we are in complete and final possession of it.

Whoever wishes further exhibition of the contradictions latent in Popper's ethical program should read pp. 469-471 in H. D. Aiken's admirable review of the *Open Society and Its Enemies*, 1947, to which our discussion would have been substantially indebted had it come earlier to our notice.

Unwilling to condone Plato's claim to know, Popper has yet arranged a means of saving from the ranks of dogmatists and enlisting under his own banner two of the greatest moral teachers in the persons of Jesus and Socrates. But this cannot be justified. Socrates, as we have seen, was not a "critical dualist";¹⁵⁷ he did not declare that no faith can claim universal validity, but rather testified that the universal human values into which he had insight and for which he stood must take precedence over the values to which the Athenians had enacted that he should bow. His confession that he was unable to frame definitions of the virtues and specify their mutual relations must

what we have been terming Plato's moral dogmatism permitted him to estimate at its true worth their contribution to the life of Greece.

Since Grote's famous vindication of the sophists from the exaggerated collective condemnation of them that had so long remained the orthodox view, and for which Plato's depiction of them was taken to constitute sufficient evidence, the sophists have had an almost uniformly "good press." Their kinship at so many points to the interests and sympathies, and even prejudices, of nineteenth- and twentieth-century liberals, has won them many able and enthusiastic vindicators, and out of an abundant literature has come genuine proof of their intelligence, their good will, and their fertile *aperçus* and discoveries in many fields from grammar to sociology. But in consequence of this revision there has been a tendency to "white out" some of the blacker spots that really belong in the historical picture, with the further result of seemingly throwing out of focus the view taken of them by some of their less appreciative contemporaries. It is thus that it has become difficult again, and for the opposite reason, to understand in its true light what now appears as Plato's perverse failure to assign them a higher rating.

What then can be fairly said of Plato's justice in this matter? It cannot be denied that he has given them less than their due in some respects. Take Hippias: From the two dialogues that bear his name, one carries away the impression—which may, indeed, have had some basis in the character of the man—of a pretentious pedant, boasting of his universal proficiency in every art, craft, and science. But who would suspect that this man, as the most authoritative contemporary opinion now holds (cf. Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, I, p. 118), was also

a genuinely creative mathematician? It would be difficult, too, from the formal analysis of the dialogue called the *Sophist*, to infer that any honest and intelligent thinker could be discovered in the group.

On the other hand, this same Plato, we remember (cf. pp. 217, 294), has credited to Protagoras in the dialogue of that name a myth of exquisite literary art, loaded with ideas many of which are impossible to discriminate from those that he has elsewhere advanced in all earnestness under his own name. And in the *Theaetetus* 152 ff., esp. 166 ff., we have seen him generously offering of his subtlest epistemological insights for the elaboration and defense against banal objections of the Protagorean relativity, as a prerequisite to its fair evaluation. Notice, also, that Plato can show a respectful courtesy to Gorgias, in the dialogue of that name, 448-460, and recognize the honorable intention behind ideas and practices to which he himself is thoroughly opposed, postponing their refutation until their consequences are presented patently and blatantly by a disciple, Polus, for whom Plato holds no restraining respect.

Furthermore, if we remind ourselves of some of the actually nihilistic doctrines proclaimed by an Antiphon, or by a Polus and a Thrasymachus, we should have no difficulty in seeing how, to an ethical idealist such as Plato, it must have appeared mandatory to "crush the infamy" of "sophistry." It becomes at least fully understandable also why Plato, who had inherited from Socrates the task of vindicating objective truth and goodness against subjective relativism and cynical nihilism, should, in the heat of conflict, have been deficient in his appreciation of the genuine merits of those whom he regarded collectively as the enemy.

¹⁵⁷See pp. 302-303 above, 635-637 below.

the assistance of guides for whom the goal toward which they pointed was good beyond the reach of doubt. As we have seen above, moral dogmatism was the anchor of the gentle but unyielding faith of Epicurus, in this respect at one with his Stoic rivals. In neither case can any evils be shown to have resulted from the certitude, apart from blindness to the excellences of other views, and in both cases it supplied a serviceable energy of conviction. If it is true that moral dogmatists lighted the fires of the Inquisition and sought to glorify God by repressing man in Calvin's Geneva, it is no less true that moral dogmatists, some centuries later, were among the prime movers of the abolition of slavery. It is even true, despite the paradox, that the establishment of religious freedom itself was attained largely through the confident assertion that it was God's will to be worshipped without constraint. And though one may deplore the errors, one must not ignore the immense contribution to the life of the spirit that has entered history through this often tragic door. What history might conceivably have been without intense convictions about ultimate right and wrong is matter of conjecture, but these have been too deeply involved in the spiritual achievement of the race to justify any member of our species in treating them as aberrations which we might have dispensed with altogether, to our profit.

Let us not lightly pass over the impoverishment to our heritage that a ban on moral dogmatism would entail. Consider the historic function of those preachers whose moral eloquence and sublimity have won for them the name of Prophet in the most exalted sense. They speak out of a burning conviction, for which dogmatism is almost too light a name, that through the channel of their being an absolute truth has been dispatched to mankind. Their message we tend today to translate out of a literal language that speaks of a just and merciful Jehovah into the more sophisticated language of projected moral ideals of justice and mercy, and in these terms even a convinced atheist can continue to honor them. But this is true only with a qualification which, we suggest, has equal relevance to Plato. We must assume that their dogmatic conviction was a measure of the energy of their devotion to an ideal truth, and not, primarily, an assertion of "how right I am." They must be understood (to paraphrase an admirable dictum) as wishing to be on God's side rather than merely claiming to have God on theirs. And to this end we see them flinging their whole heart and soul and mind into the momentous struggle. Just so, if in a less tempestuous and more philosophic key, and hence with more tolerance for opinions other than his own, did Plato testify to his faith in the spiritual ideal.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ A fair measure of Plato's way of dealing with doctrines which are in basic conflict with his own is discoverable in his treatment of the sophists. We have earlier commented upon his outlook upon some of

the best-known bearers of this name, e.g., Protagoras, pp. 291-295, Hippias, pp. 58 and 60, Gorgias, p. 432. Here we wish to make as clear as the still controversial character of the question will allow how far

Unwilling to condone Plato's claim to know, Popper has yet arranged a means of saving from the ranks of dogmatists and enlisting under his own banner two of the greatest moral teachers in the persons of Jesus and Socrates. But this cannot be justified. Socrates, as we have seen, was not a "critical dualist";¹⁵⁷ he did not declare that no faith can claim universal validity, but rather testified that the universal human values into which he had insight and for which he stood must take precedence over the values to which the Athenians had enacted that he should bow. His confession that he was unable to frame definitions of the virtues and specify their mutual relations must

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¹⁵⁷ See pp. 302-304 above, 635-637 below.

not obscure the certainty with which he affirmed his knowledge of the basic values and goals of human life.

That the founder of Christianity could be made to appear as a forerunner of "critical dualism," one might have thought impossible, but Popper has given the impossibility a brief semblance of actuality by the apt choice of a quotation. He cites the familiar contrast between "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time . . ." and "But I say unto you . . .," as indicative of the essential contrast between "mere formal obedience" and "the voice of conscience." That this contrast has a central place in the religious ethic of Jesus we take to be common ground to all interpreters. What is unwarranted, however, is the implication that in thus denying the authority of tradition, Jesus was disavowing a knowledge of the ground of human good in the will and law of God. There was, for Jesus, no suggestion of a dualism between "fact" and "norm" or "decision." Nor is there any basis for the supposition that he regarded moral norms as in any sense created by human conscience. There is for him one Father whose will should be done on earth as it is in Heaven. And conscience, if we may employ a term absent from his vocabulary, was the opening of the inward eye to the seeing of God's truth. If the sentiment quoted by Popper establishes the compatibility of the fundamental position of critical dualism with Christianity, then it will do the same for Plato, who himself denounced the traditionally received beliefs on many a vital question and sought to win his hearers' honest assent to his own newer insights. But these two equal errors will not correct each other. They merely prevent us from seeing what is basic, namely, that these two men were, each in his own way, affirming a prophetic message that fused value and truth.

Speaking thus in behalf of those who have claimed a universal knowledge of good and evil, we do not mean to legislate for all future ages, or even to deny that certain enlightened thinkers of our time have shown that for themselves, at least, and possibly for a certain number of our contemporaries, no loss in moral earnestness is entailed by their announced abandonment of all "belief" or "knowledge"; though it is the opinion of the present writer that so long as they continue, like Popper, to champion as right certain "decisions" and to denounce others with equal ardor, they have in effect changed rather the verbal form than the substance of certainty, and are equally involved with the dogmatists in passing judgment upon the acts and opinions of others. Such persons are surely within their rights, and are even, one may believe, performing a service by thus attempting to find a philosophic base for proclaiming new charters of freedom for mankind. But they are serving no good end by writing their program into history and asking us to condemn all our other spiritual guides for the fault of claiming knowledge.

But it is quite possible that Popper and Kelsen will object that they have not condemned all certainty in all ages, and will assent to the proposition

that some forms of moral dogmatism have, in times comfortably remote, made contribution to human progress. They would, however, one is very sure, stoutly deny that in any age a moral dogmatism can retain anything of human worth when combined, as they see Plato combining it, with the attempt to "compel them to come in." And in this denial they would as certainly be sustained by the convictions of a large part of the liberal world. Must we then agree that Plato shall suffer condemnation as the enemy of freedom of conscience? Yes, with a large proviso. Plato was wrong, and has exemplified here that intolerance of which we spoke above, which Whitehead has called "the besetting sin of moral fervour."¹⁵⁷ In extenuation, it can be said that Plato had not lived through the centuries intervening between him and ourselves, and was insufficiently aware of the futility of attempts to enforce opinion and of the horrors to which they lead; that he required under penalty of the law the acceptance of only a minimum religious creed, hardly more than that expected by John Locke in his establishment of the minimum limitations upon religious toleration;¹⁵⁸ that he was indeed too hopeful of the powers of example, precept, and rational argument, but that he envisaged no use of cruelties, such as were used against heretics in mediaeval times. As we have earlier argued, nothing in his Socratic heritage had put his feet firmly on the road leading to a tolerance permissive of all beliefs. And finally, in rejecting the usual Athenian inattention¹⁵⁹ to what a man believed, so long as his actions conformed to the civic requirements, Plato may well have felt that he was correcting a blindness in the Athenian outlook which had failed to observe with sufficient clarity that acts arise from beliefs and that good citizenship cannot be manufactured out of nihilism and indifference, nor mutual loyalty out of creeds which lead to radically different ideals of conduct. This problem shifts its locus, but in our day as in Plato's finds no simple solution; witness Popper's own sanctioning (and ours) of the use of force against active advocates of the totalitarian overthrow of freedom. We can and should see Plato's error, therefore, and condemn his proposal, but we need not see it as evidence of depravity or special tyrannousness, or because of it fail to see the moral fervor from which it grew.

A third position open to Plato's attackers is that taken by Kelsen, namely: that the particular form of moral dogmatism which affirms the immediate identity of knowledge and virtue is inevitably more oppressive than those forms which admit the interposition of the will between belief and act, since

¹⁵⁷ *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 63.

¹⁵⁸ This statement is not designed to obscure the overwhelmingly liberal character of Locke's ideal of religious toleration, the freedom he would grant (and Plato would not) to the various modes of worship, and his deprecation of ecclesiastical sanctions beyond the gentle exercise of excommunication. Yet he states in terms that atheists

are "not at all to be tolerated," averring that "the taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all" (*A Letter concerning Toleration* (1689), Oxford, 1946, p. 156).

¹⁵⁹ It will be remembered that we have discussed the Athenian attitude toward religious dissenters on pp 316f and 355-358.

especially if it is made the foundation of government, it must attempt to control men's minds. This contention is not merely a challenge to Socrates and Plato; it is equivalent to the assertion that no member of the Socratic family could have supplied an adequate basis for a constitution for the reason that the entire line of ethicists, Antisthenes and Aristippus, no less than Zeno and Epicurus, busied themselves with ingenious transformations of the equation "V-K." Nor is it true that governments based on other ethical theories would be automatically precluded from inquiry into the inner recesses of men's minds; for the identification of virtue with faith or right opinion, or with the good will, could equally well appear to justify an attempt to control the source of action rather than merely to regulate action itself. No, the sources of Plato's error must be sought elsewhere, as we have suggested above. And before leaving this topic, we may call attention to the tolerant and universalistic implications which underlie this definition of virtue in terms of knowledge, springing as it does from the Socratic faith in the native affinity of men to reason and the good. Such virtue is not dependent on the privilege of birth or special divine favor, owes no allegiance to unexamined custom, and is communicable from man to man by the gentle suasions of discourse. If any moral dogmatism is to supply a basis for government, this would appear to be among the best.

And finally, there is the position which Popper has implicitly taken, in which the moral dogmatism of an ancient thinker, though *per se* undesirable, is regarded as venial or damnable, according to the company it keeps. Thus Popper could justify his acceptance of the moral dogmatism of Antisthenes or Alcidamas, while rejecting Plato's, which he sees as a defense of totalitarian oppression. To this we must reply: it is granted that moral dogmatism multiplies by its own intensity the evils in any evil program to which it is applied. But unless all our doctrine is vain, the Platonic program as a whole can scarcely be so described. When Plato is being most dogmatic, he is commonly declaring a rational faith which makes human excellence independent of race or time or social class, which sets the same divine law over all mankind and seeks only to discover that good end which the universe subserves and man can join in serving. If Plato also taught some doctrines we cannot accept, shall his moral certainty still be utterly condemned?

One other large and dubious assumption seems to underlie the criticism offered by Kelsen and Popper of Plato's claim to authoritative knowledge, namely: the tacit postulate that one is entitled to pass directly from the detection of abnormalities and distortions in the personality of a thinker to the condemnation of his thought.¹⁵⁸ In its most general form this raises the truly

¹⁵⁸ Kelsen has put on record (p. 6) his repudiation of this procedure, which, however, he ignores in his own subsequent ar-

gument, as we have noted in his deflation of the Socratic-Platonic equation of virtue and knowledge into a mere "pretext" (page

abysmal question of the value relation between the psychic structure of a philosopher and the quality of his ideas and beliefs. Are the two things independent of each other in such fashion as to permit the coexistence in a given thinker of "bad," that is, abnormal or pathological motivation, and "good," that is, philosophically valuable doctrines? Or, excluding as obviously untenable both this and its extreme opposite, must we hold that some degree of distortion of a man's personality will appear inevitably as an equivalent disfigurement in the substance of the thought?

The situation recalls our mention at the beginning of our discussion in Chapter 4 of Plato's alleged defects of mind and character, of the world's demand that moral teachers shall themselves be morally admirable. We are now encountering a far more extreme demand laid upon the philosopher, who is expected to be a veritable Caesar's wife, above not only "crime" but "suspicion." An instructive parallel may be found in the various attempts to interpret the Christian gospel as the product of a disordered — hysterical — perhaps homosexual — what-you-will mentality, attempts to which one of the Platonic detractors has lent some support.¹⁵⁹ These researches have uniformly failed to cast doubt upon the value of the Christian message, and the chief cause of the failure is applicable, in essence, if less flamboyantly, to Plato: It is very difficult to believe that a distorted personality is capable of preaching a Sermon on the Mount or composing the ten books of the *Republic*, if these are rightly interpreted; and if by any chance one has finally succeeded in believing this, he confronts the new and equal difficulty of believing that what has achieved so remarkable a result is rightly to be classified as a disordered personality, or must accept the paradox that disordered personalities are among the highest human goods. Thus, whether or not Plato had delusions of personal grandeur, or suffered from a pathological desire to dominate, his message must be construed in the terms in which he has himself stated it: we must hold him responsible for those and only those ideas to which he stood philosophically committed. In so far as this message is then found to be promotive or destructive of what we believe to be humanly or divinely good, we may say that the personality which sustained it and made it possible was to this degree and for these purposes good or bad. Whoever refuses to accord primacy to the doctrines as against the personality of a given thinker may find himself in the embarrassing situation of the critics in *Fanny's First Play*, unable to pass judgment on the quality of the piece until they know who has written it.

But we cannot leave this complex relationship between mental peculiarities and philosophical achievement without some indication of their positive

85) for that excessive urge to dominate which he sees arising out of the peculiarities of each man's Eros.

¹⁵⁹ Kelsen, as we have remarked on p.

102 above, appears to see in Jesus psychic abnormalities similar to those which he detects in Plato

correlation. In spite of our denial of any simple relationship between the most distorted, even the "sick" personality, and the value of ideas, we would not deny that the thinker's personality is one factor in determining the content of his thought, and that distortion in the one will tend to introduce alterations in the other. This influence, however, will inevitably be intricately combined with the familiar effects of cultural environment, historical events within his experience, all the accidents of his biography, and the juncture in the history of thought at which he reaches reflective maturity. Various personality traits may hinder or further the logical working out of his premises, as we have seen in Plato's case, for example, in the barrier posed by his intellectuality and personal aloofness to his understanding of the common man, and on the other hand, in the urgency of his desire to bring the full benefit of Socratic insight to the service of his fellows.

Some help toward measuring Plato by an appropriate psychological standard may be found in Herzberg's thoughtful study,¹⁶⁰ in which the psychic structures of thirty "kings of philosophic thought" throughout the centuries were investigated and compared, to the end of determining what mental characteristics form the common basic equipment for major contributors to the history of thought. One need not accept the radical "psychologism" of this author, according to whom the approvable function of philosophy is its contribution to mental health, providing, as it does, an outlet for inhibited impulses, an escape from "harsh and intractable reality" into a "painless" and "satisfying world," and a creative satisfaction in achieving and expressing so imposing a system of ideas. Nor need we accept entire his treatment of Plato, whom he sees as a homosexual and depicts in the light of the exceedingly doubtful Second Letter, which he believes to be genuine, as a highly inhibited, even an absurdly timid person;¹⁶¹ fortunately, for most of the others among his philosophers, more dependable data were available. Herzberg's general conclusions, grounded upon the broad base of a dispassionate survey, remind us powerfully of the fact that within our Western culture, at least, the most fruitful philosophic results more often than not appear as the outcome of tormented mental processes. In most of these philosophers Herzberg believes it possible to demonstrate the presence of powerful impulses held in check by equally powerful inhibitions which, by the mechanism of "sublimation," he supposes to have supplied the indispensable energy; and in all cases, he believes, some degree of rebellion against authority, as embodied in traditional belief, has driven its possessors to enunciate their novel doctrines. Through it all, he has directed our attention to the intricate transmutation of initially "bad" into terminally good qualities. On this view, then,

¹⁶⁰ *The Psychology of Philosophers*, by Alexander Herzberg, 1929.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 68, 140. Herzberg would seem to have reached his view of Plato as

a homosexual by interpreting in this sense the findings of Wilamowitz; cf. our n. 103, p. 114.

if we find in Plato something other than the serenity of the phantom hero of a textbook on mental hygiene, we need not be shocked into wild surmises as to his hidden and unwholesome purposes. We are left, if we so desire and if sufficient data can be had, to search a little more deeply into the sources of his tensions, and to remember that the great thinker is commonly one who has paid a great price for the message which he holds out to us. These considerations may then keep us from doing Plato perhaps the greatest injury that can be offered any thinker: to ignore what he has sought to say to us, in our zeal to prove that its meaning must be sought on the level not of validity but of pathology.

In an early chapter we offered a brief *vita Platonis* restricted to the external facts of his career. We need now to supplement that account by describing a conceivable structure of personality traits and purposes underlying his attitude to power and authoritative knowledge, using as a criterion in selecting our material our best notion of what a contemporary psychologist of personality would wish to know and would be willing to credit. In view of our rebukes to the detractors for their audacity in drawing maximal conclusions from minimal data, be it hereby known that no apodictic certainty for any of the conclusions reached in the following section is claimed, and that the purpose of this section is to show that the hypotheses of the detractors are by no means the only construction that can be put upon the "facts of the case." In other words, the implicit challenge to accept these damaging interpretations or provide a better is hereinafter accepted. And since the challenge cannot be met without attempting to construe the meager facts concerning Plato's life into a rounded conception of his personality, we are constrained to enter upon that dark and slippery ground. We shall be as economical as possible in drawing support from conjecture, but we shall not hesitate in the circumstances to make use of probabilities, properly labeled.

But before beginning our psychograph, we must pause to describe a certain complex of character traits to which under the title of the "authoritarian personality" the *Zeitgeist* of our era has devoted anxious attention. The relevance of this semiclinical personality pattern to the understanding of Plato is a problem upon which our psychological portrait may hope to shed a little light. That Plato exemplifies this pattern none of our detractors has formally charged, but both Kelsen and Popper have employed concepts trenching closely upon it, and it is quite possible that at this very moment some indignant person is composing an article on authoritarianism in which Plato is shown as its original avatar. We wish, therefore, to include this complaint against Plato, entered collectively in the name of the twentieth century, and herewith submit two descriptions of the "disease," abbreviated from the contemporary literature.

Fromm has described the "authoritarian," or what he more horrendously

calls the "sado-masochistic" personality, as characterized by the desire to dominate others so completely as to deprive them of all independence and simultaneously to submit to a power overwhelmingly stronger than oneself.¹⁶² He implies that in those individuals who emerge as leaders, and who display this disposition in its extremer forms, it arises typically from suppressed resentment and fear of a too strict and threatening parent or parent-substitute.¹⁶³ The authoritarian believes that man's destiny is determined by inexorable forces beyond his control; it is even said that all worship of any power outside the individual self is akin to authoritarianism, though worship of a forgiving God and belief in man's fundamental goodness and freedom of will mitigate this type of submission.¹⁶⁴ The authoritarian hates the powerless, whom he desires to attack; he rationalizes his hatred by declaring them to be basically inferior and by imagining them as humiliated. He also hates himself, particularly his own appetites, and can therefore not love others.¹⁶⁵ His nature is made clearer by contrast with the truly free, confident, and spontaneous individual, who, as Fromm paints him, can be known by his faith that man can direct his own fate, by his self-activity in work, and by his love and sense of duty toward others, whom he regards as his equals and whose independence he wishes to preserve. He may still wish to guide others, but only as a teacher, whose aim it is to benefit them and to help them become, like himself, independent beings.¹⁶⁶

In a short discussion of the same theme, Murphy¹⁶⁷ lists the processes whereby he conceives the authoritarian personality to be produced; he notes (1) an overdependence, carried into adulthood, upon parental attitudes regarding right and wrong; (2) an identifying attachment to the parent "anchored" primarily upon his aspect as lawgiver, at the cost of his affectionate and comradely aspects; (3) compensation for some initial damage to the self-esteem by a perpetual attempt to see oneself as admirable, resulting in excessive attachment to socially approved norms; (4) and (5), the development of a persistent adoring attitude towards rules as ends in themselves, and a naive moral realism, in accord with which "rightness" and "wrongness" are attached simply to definite actions, these two traits serving as means of achieving and justifying "petty and major despotisms" over others.

In contrast to these two pictures of unwholesome domination, we may quote briefly from the psychiatrist Schilder, who is describing the psychological essence of the parental impulse itself. He sees the emotional basis of parenthood as having been acquired by each successive generation through identification with the attitudes of its own parents, and as essentially the wish

¹⁶² Fromm, Erich, *Escape from Freedom*, 1941, pp. 141-142, 162-163.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 73, 170-172, 174, 265-267.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 96, 115-117, 168.

¹⁶⁶ Fromm, *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 157, 164-166, 261-263.

¹⁶⁷ Gardner Murphy, *Personality*, 1947, pp. 857-865.

"to experience not only love but also power" over another person. "The wish to have a child" is in both men and women, "the wish to create something going out from themselves, something which has a life of its own yet remains a part of the parent. We need an outer world, we want to have power over this outer world, we want to recreate this world into its true self, but this projected self should be better adjusted to reality than we ourselves are."¹⁶⁸ This benevolent and necessary "authoritarianism" is another attitude which we shall find reason to recognize as akin to Plato's own.

As an initial contribution to the determination of Plato's personality, we may say very confidently, the dicebox of heredity had seen to it that from the start the boy Plato should be isolated somewhat from his playfellows, set apart as an exceptional individual both in his own awareness and in theirs by his possession of an enormously able mind. Furthermore, two traits in the personality of the mature Plato are so insistently visible in the dialogues as to drive us to the conclusion that they rest upon a psychic structure established in his early age. These are an uncompromising demand upon himself and others, for the realization of a high, even rigorous, standard of moral excellence, and tempering the austerity of this ideal, a deep concern, no whit diminished by the infrequency of its sentimental expression, a truly paternal impulse, to champion against injustice, and to enlighten and direct to their real good and well-being all members of the human family within reach of his voice. These qualities may well have originated from the idealized image of his father, whom he early lost, or of some other authoritative and protective male member of his primary group, to whom he was attached in bonds of affectionate and quasi-filial intimacy, and who set for him that exacting standard of achievement which he presently made his own.

It has sometimes been suggested that a close affinity exists between Plato's "father image" and his conception of the divine; Kelsen, for example, has spoken of Plato's idea of the Good in the *Republic* as an exalted symbol for the dead Ariston.¹⁶⁹ In so far as this connection is accepted, it can be made to yield an interesting reflection from the celestial back to the terrestrial parent. For in the *Timaeus*, as we have seen, Plato speaks of a "Maker and Father of this Universe" who "was good . . . and . . . desired that all should be, so far as possible, like unto himself" (28 B, 29 E), and who by "intelligent persuasion" induced blind Necessity to bring "to the best end the most part of the things coming into being" (48 A).¹⁷⁰ Nor does the Platonic Form of the Good operate despotically, but rather by force of its own splendor and loveliness it compels the love of the beholder (*Republic* 517 B-C, 508 E-509 A, *Phaedrus* 250 D). Surely, if anything of the suggested connotation

¹⁶⁸ Paul Schilder, *Goals and Desires of Man*, 1912, pp. 176-178.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. p. 102 above.

¹⁷⁰ *Trans. Bury, Loeb Library*.

is valid, we have here evidence that the father-figure whom Plato revered was no such stern task-master as the father-figure of the supposedly typical authoritarian has the logical duty to be.

These assumptions would throw light upon a much disputed region of Plato's personality. The high standard he had set for himself, reinforcing the isolating tendency of his exceptional intelligence, would be sufficient to account for that mixture of a clear consciousness of his own superiority with doubt of his acceptance by others, that ambivalent attitude toward social approval, and that sense of tension and struggle in the control of his passions, to explain which Kelsen has superfluously invoked his hypothesis of Plato's extreme homosexuality.¹⁷¹ On the positive side, the supporting relationship with his father or father-substitute, and the protective affection and approbation that he probably enjoyed in addition from mother and nurse, brothers and cousins, supplied him with the key to understanding the value of intimate human relationships, while providing him with a firm basis of inner self-confidence. Not improbably, his membership in a close-knit wider kinship group, with which he gladly identified himself, taught him to feel the worth of solidarity. His self-confidence would be further enhanced by his good physique, and, as his awareness grew, by the pleasant discovery of his family's prestige and of the honors and advantages conferred by full Athenian citizenship.

With our hypothetical psychologist closely in view, we may now change our tactics, and carry forward our attempt to account for major strands in Plato's adult personality by distinguishing the several "identifications" with other persons or with social "roles" which he seems to have made during his formative years, and which were not sloughed off almost without trace (like the schoolboy role, for example) as the years passed. The first of these, the identification with the father, or protective and authoritative older relative, we have already discussed, but we shall return to it because of its paramountcy: on our assumption, it was permanent, and it stood in close, supporting relationship to major elements of his personality which were later to be added.

Three other identifications will claim our attention, of which the first was Plato's self-assimilation not so much to a particular person as to a composite which we may call the "Euphues" role. In spite of its misleading association with the Elizabethan master of "conceits," I venture to employ this name not only because Plato had a special fondness for it, but because he applies it in the *Republic* to those young men whose joint excellence of mind and body set them apart as uniquely qualified to undertake, after rigorous training, the

¹⁷¹ It is not doubted that Plato experienced homosexual emotion. But it will be remembered that Kelsen saw in him a degree of homosexuality far in excess of that

which was accepted among Athenians of Plato's social group, and this we have shown to be unproved.

high function of intellectual and moral direction in the ideal state, or to take an important part in the affairs of any properly conducted city. Alcibiades is all but named (*Republic* 494 B) as a *manqué* instance of a Euphues, a born philosopher, distinguished by "quickness in learning, memory, courage and magnificence." Such a one, "even as a boy . . . will take the lead in all things, especially if the nature of his body matches the soul." We may note, from its similarity to what was later to be Plato's own case, the fact that "his kinsmen and fellow citizens . . . will desire . . . to make use of him when he is older for their own affairs." It is from among the small number of such natures as these (495 B) that "those spring who do the greatest harm to communities and individuals, and the greatest good when the stream chances to be turned in that direction." 172

As it stands, this description is an indispensable part of the structure of the *Republic*; has it corresponding significance as a reflection of a stage in the development of its author's personality? In order to elicit meaning of this sort from the Alcibiades passage, we must remember first that Alcibiades for Plato was no abstract example introduced into a formal exposition of the qualities expectable in a potential philosopher. He was rather a memory of one whom at an impressionable age Plato had doubtless seen in the flesh, and with whom he may also have conversed. Apart from the bond of social class, he was related to Plato as an older one-time pupil of his admired teacher Socrates and as a fellow pupil, friend, and associate of Plato's uncle, Critias. We remember how vividly Plato in the *Symposium* has depicted Alcibiades as still a wavering follower, "faithful in his fashion" to the Socratic ideal. The intensity of the later report argues that the rise and fall of this brilliant but ultimately lost leader had deeply moved the young Plato. Had it also held up before him in his earlier years a role which, with certain alterations and improvements in the acting, he felt himself qualified to play? It is not possible to answer this question with a categorical "yes," but I think this is one of the points at which a limited display of audacity is in order. If ever a gifted and imaginative boy had set before him materials for his heroic and tragic imagination to elaborate into an example of conjoint imitation and warning, the conditions were here fulfilled, and the common relation to Socrates would have facilitated identification. It is at least a colorful hypothesis that the example of Alcibiades had inspired Plato with the short-lived hope of succeeding where Alcibiades had failed as the follower of Socrates in politics, the statesman who should reestablish the ancient dignity of Athens on a new and unshakable base of philosophic knowledge, and should set before the world the example of her virtuous greatness.

But Alcibiades, if the "shiningest," was not the only embodiment of this role. There was also that other tragic failure, the much disputed, two-valued

near relation, also a Socratic in his earlier time, Critias. How much of a Euphues was he, and could he also have served Plato as model for any identifiable part of his personality? From what was said in an earlier discussion, it will be remembered that at least until after the period of his life represented in the *Charmides* and in the *Protagoras*, Critias possessed an unblemished, even enviable record as man of intellect and artistic talent, combined with social facility and political promise. In the former character he might well have dazzled his young nephew by the profusion of his gifts: poet, playwright, even philosopher, with a theory of time and of knowledge and an interest in the comparative anatomy of constitutions. And that this man was, during the years in question, the pupil and familiar of the revered Socrates, must have appeared to his youthful admirer the final seal of moral validation. Ardent, energetic, unquestionably intelligent, supposedly high-principled, and no doubt of handsome presence, Critias, it thus appears, would have merited a high rating on the Platonic scale as a Euphues.

We must now turn over the medallion to consider its tarnished side, which is fully as revealing to the student of Plato's personality as the obverse. For if in the Critias we have considered thus far, Plato found reënforcing allurements toward the role and goal of man of thought, of letters, of high principle, and of action, it was quite as clearly the Critias of 404 who gave Plato, at the very threshold of his political career, his best reasons for not entering upon it. A man of Plato's moral commitments could find no compromise with the regime of the Thirty, or with any of its surviving supporters; nor could he, with his principled opposition to democracy as it existed at Athens and his known family affiliations, have been either a willing or a welcome addition to the ranks of the restored democrats.

A third and most momentous identification had, even before the debacle of the Thirty, achieved lodgment in the personality of a Plato then approaching his twenty-fifth year. It would not be difficult to argue (as Kelsen has also done) ¹⁷³ that the first psychic gift of Socrates to his young pupil was that of a second "father image," extending its warmth and protection to him, and beyond him to the elastic circle of all who chose to submit themselves to its benevolent sway, and that along with this, he offered Plato an anchorage for his belief in the possibility and supreme importance of moral excellence. Here, too, was a man—the Socratic dialogues, written long after, vibrate with the astonished conviction—in whom reason was quietly at work in seeking to impress its image upon all human activities and passions. This was a role which the deepest impulses in Plato's soul desired to play, for the sake of which he would renounce or modify all conflicting aims, a renunciation well expressed in the traditional story of his burning of his tragedies after meeting Socrates. Legend might also have reported further symbolical burn-

¹⁷³ Kelsen, p. 46.

ings; for if he was to make himself fully one with this admired teacher, he must disavow the elements of self-claim so conspicuously contained in the Euphuus role as enacted by Alcibiades and Critias: he could never share their elegant skepticism, or emulate such self-indulgence as was inseparable from their way of life. Furthermore, Socrates, in striking contrast to these young aristocrats and to Plato's father as well, was a commoner. To this fact Plato may well owe much of his success in purging his human ideal of irrelevant pomp and circumstance and in reaching the Euphuus conception as we see it in the *Republic*, that of a man well-endowed, not well supplied with noble or wealthy ancestors.

The death of Socrates was the decisive event which at once widened to a chasm the gap between Plato and the Athenian democracy, and thrust upon him the duty of preserving and strengthening the memory, of spreading and confirming the doctrine of this "justest man of his time." This is the birth of that double star which Emerson thought it beyond the power of the critical telescope to separate, the combined role of Plato-Socrates, which consolidated all the elements in his previous experience not in conflict with the new aim, and provided full scope for all his rich endowment.

We have spoken in an earlier chapter of one other life-long object of Plato's imitative regard, his revered ancestor Solon. As Plato's life advanced, it is fair to say that he came more and more closely under the Solonian influence. For in his two most monumental works, and we may add, for good measure, the *Politicus*, Plato was enacting, ideally, the role of legislator, and for the reasons earlier given,¹⁷⁴ it can be stated that in large part the great prototype that inspired him was that of the Athenian lawgiver and poet who sought justice and civic harmony before all else, and expressed this quest in memorable and persuasive literary form.

While it is not contended that the complete Plato can be conjured out of the psychic constituents thus far suggested, we do submit with some little confidence that our hypothetical construction comports well with the great problems with which he chose to concern himself and the solutions with which he stood content. But if our fundamental contention is right, Plato's personality, no matter how completely we might be able to delineate it, cannot be looked to as the exhaustive source of the Platonic message, which contains elements derived from many objective sources; and to these we now turn.

We must first remind ourselves of those features of the Athenian environment that left their mark upon Plato's mind, setting problems and establishing the orbit within which his ethical and political thought was to move. After every allowance has been made for Athens' great cultural and political achievements, there were grave defects objectively present in Athenian society. During his most plastic years, from boyhood to early maturity, Plato had seen

¹⁷⁴ See pp. 262 and 331-332.

little else than war and civic convulsions, bitter fruit that might well have appeared to him to reveal unsoundness at the heart of the tree — the Periclean and post-Periclean democracy — upon which they had grown.¹⁷⁵ Nor did the fourth century, as it advanced, confute this opinion. The restored democracy, it is true, for a time followed more cautious and enlightened international policies, but the passion for imperial domination was destined to show itself again when opportunity offered. The utter discrediting of the extreme oligarchic faction had produced a general agreement to let the constitution stand, in the main, unaltered, as the sole alternative to civic chaos; but again, so great was the jealousy of the demos to preserve its every prerogative, that even moderate reforms could not be proposed without extreme danger to the proponent. The irresponsible power of the orators at the Assembly and in the courts remained at least as great as it had been at the time of Cleon, and was often exercised to seek the banishment or death of political opponents, however meritorious their record of service to the state, or was employed simply for purposes of extortion. Small wonder that cynical antimoralism still had its advocates and practitioners, and that a prudent regard for personal safety and survival remained necessary equipment for any man in public life, to the detriment of civic harmony and devotion to the common good. And the unity of the Hellenic world, in defiance of the sacred bond of kinship and shared cultural and religious tradition, continued to be sundered by recurrent and unrestricted wars.¹⁷⁶

To one who, like Plato, saw in all this the evidence of perverted values and the repudiation of mutual obligations, the situation called for radical reform, reform which must be grounded in the moral truths he had accepted from Socrates, and must also be implemented wherever possible by decisive changes in the social order. Political action, in the circumstances, was for Plato impossible; not so the continued attempt to strengthen and extend the theoretical basis of ethics, and to develop norms by which, at some more propitious time which providence might one day supply, a genuinely moral commonwealth might be set up.

But the course of Plato's development cannot be simplified into the history of a temperament reacting to the Athenian scene; a second set of objective influences demands recognition. He was born into a culture in which ideas were pursued and actively manipulated by individual thinkers versed in the technique of critical and speculative inquiry. Around the young Plato swarmed a medley of philosophical and scientific views and systems, the

¹⁷⁵ This statement has received full documentation in Chapter 7, especially pp. 331-326.

¹⁷⁶ This account of the situation in the fourth century owes much to Field, *Plato and His Contemporaries*, 1930, ch. VIII, and

is confirmed by the rather scattered report on Athenian affairs of the period, given in the *Cambridge Ancient History*, VI, principally on pp. 25-26, 34-35, 55-57, 70-75, and 103-107.

achievement of the nearly two centuries since Thales. Plato, throwing himself eagerly into the congenial task, selected, assimilated, and reshaped those elements of this medley which he deemed valid into a vision of what was, for him, compelling truth.

From the Parmenidean principle of unshakable Being, from the Heraclitean flux, from the Pythagorean worship of number and measure and the Orphic-Pythagorean dualism of soul and body, Plato drew the materials for building his ordered universe, wherein the reluctance of matter is brought by the divine persuasion to partake of the excellence and order of the eternal forms. The Socratic belief in the primacy of the soul and in knowledge as the way to virtue, and his practical postulate that all souls are in some degree capable of such knowledge, provide the channel through which the ideal values pass into human life, while the diverse capacities of individuals, in their particular embodiments, make it necessary and right that in the political realm some shall exercise guidance over others, always inviting and in individual cases, if necessary, compelling them toward justice. The city-state as the pattern of organization and the distinction between citizen and metic and slave, are taken over from existing practice, and along with them are carried into the social system such dross as the tolerance in certain circumstances of infanticide and of harshness to criminals, and the acceptance as inevitable of perpetual warfare, if not among Greeks, at least between Greeks and barbarians. The Platonic social structure is a hierarchy, running from top to bottom. But even the lowest member has an interest which the highest is bound to regard, and in his eternal destiny shares equally the hope of rising to the full height of the ideal. In sum, Plato had carried through to the best of his ability the colossal task (never, indeed, brought to systematic completion) of framing a synoptic theory of Being and of Value, in terms of which to fulfill the Socratic demand for knowledge of the virtues and their interrelationship, and, moreover, had shown the possibility of designing on the basis of this knowledge forms of political organization capable of maintaining, along with the spiritual welfare, the safety and material interests of all their members.

A philosophical moralist may rightly be held strictly accountable for those principles with which he begins and which he must be assumed to have seen clearly and to have chosen for their own dear sakes, but he is less to be condemned, though still accountable, for what that beginning may appear later to entail, especially if the bright initial "truths" have dazzled him a little by their luminosity. Plato did not begin with the aim of banishing Homer, condemning atheists, or refusing to permit the young to hear objections to their city's laws or morals, but when these procedures appeared as the necessary costs of overwhelming benefits, they took on, for him, the moral quality of the ends they served. If this is the logic underlying the rejected doctrine, "*Finis medium justificat*," it is also, we may add, the logic justifying

such "necessities" as the execution of criminals, an end for which no society exists. Plato unfortunately had no access to those principles, moral and prudential, which today forbid us to accept those of his proposals which we judge illiberal. Whether Plato would have actually carried out all his own unhappy recommendations may be doubted; it is too easily forgotten that Plato did not rule the Republic, or put into effect the regulations of his *Laws*. But what is certain, and of importance for our judgment of his character, is that these flaws in Plato's scheme tell us only what he did not, unfortunately, reject on instinct; they support no inference as to his instinctive purposes and positive aims.

Plato's deep and passionate conviction that there was an ethico-political problem to be solved, urgent, all-important, for which his Socratic insights had adequately prepared him to offer solutions, was met by the counterthrust of an antipathetic, even hostile environment. Could not this war of mighty opposites have generated a tension in his soul sufficient to account for all the inner struggle that Popper has entered under the gratuitous caption of guilt, and has proposed as explanation of Plato's otherwise inexplicable fascination? If more than this is needed, we may appeal also to the tension between the ideal of personal conduct, set, as we have seen, so high in Plato's case, and man's passional and appetitive nature, to which Plato, though wishing to satisfy its legitimate claims, was determined not to yield control.

If Plato grew to his full maturity under stresses and strains such as we have surmised, it is then not at all remarkable that a close eye should detect some deviations from the norm of the complacent bourgeois. What is more worthy of comment is the over-all sanity of the man. We are once more reminded of Emerson's oracular dictum: "the balanced soul came." Plato's response to the challenge of his environment would seem to have been all that a professor of mental hygiene could have prescribed: he adjusted his goal to the possibilities of achievement, which in his circumstances meant renunciation, or at least indefinite postponement, of public action, and the devising for himself of a way of life which would permit him a working expression, in a narrower sphere, of his basic purposes. We are not surprised, then, to find him adapting to his own use in the Academy the Socratic technique of education through the living word, the illuminating interplay of mind with mind, directed to the Socratic end of bettering the soul; similarly we find him carrying forward that interest in the technique of clear and precise thinking whereby Socrates had sought to pass through knowledge to virtue. When the Sicilian summons came, Plato set forth, so to say, in the character of a Solon-Socrates, whose legislative program was designed to realize the values of both men.

Part of his energy throughout the years went into his literary creations, which, beginning apparently as a monument to Socrates, served also to acquaint the Greek world with the growing body of his thought, and, in the

following decades, with the spirit of his Academy. He has referred to the dialogues (*Phaedrus* 274 B ff.) as of secondary importance, a judgment with which most of us find it difficult literally to agree, but one that does credit to its author's modesty, and underlines the seriousness of his purpose, which refused to honor the semblance of mind equally with the living reality. Roughly speaking, we may characterize the dialogues as essentially Socratic conversations, increasingly elaborate; in their social content, they are also importantly guided by a Solonian aim, and, taken as a whole, they fulfil their author's picture of himself as a man of letters, which may have been initially inspired by Critias and, more remotely, by Solon. In spite of occasional thunderbolts of moral indignation and prophetic denunciation of the "Lord's enemies," there runs through all the dialogues a recognition of the limitations upon human knowledge, an urbane note of intellectual openness to suggestion, which Whitehead has contrasted, to Plato's advantage, with the unrelenting dogmatism of an Augustine controverting a Pelagius.¹⁷⁷ This quality has won from Crossman, despite his "hatred" of Plato's political teaching, the fine praise — he is speaking of the *Republic* — that Plato has supplied "a pattern of . . . disinterested research" which "never bullies or deceives its reader or beguiles him with appeals to sentiment, but treats him as a fellow philosopher for whom only the truth is worth having."¹⁷⁸ These admirable qualities have their expression in the *Republic* and in equal measure in the continuing stream of Plato's productions. Their permanent home, since we cannot regard them as transient dramatic fictions, was the mind and personality of Plato. There is every likelihood that they found further expression in Plato's manner of treating his maturer associates in the Academy. As to his conduct toward the younger minds under his direction, we may remind ourselves of what we earlier said, and note again the kindly consideration and encouragement that the young men seen, for example, in the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, receive at Plato's hand. Nor is it amiss to add that in dealing with those who are his fellows in age but not in capacity, as is the case in the *Laws*, he observed a fine courtesy in tempering the wind of his doctrine to the shorn and lamb-like capacities of Clinias and Megillus. In short, there emerges in contradiction to Popper's dyspeptic construction of the sour and despotic Master of the Academy,¹⁷⁹ the likeness of a man who may well have commanded not only the admiration and respect but also the affection of those willing and able to learn geometry and enter the high fellowship of the Academy.

If now we venture to apply Fromm's criteria of authoritarianism to our version of Plato's personality, we should be obliged to note as significant Plato's submission to the Divine, and, on the human level, to Socrates; but

¹⁷⁷ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, pp. 134-135.

¹⁷⁸ Crossman, pp. 292.
¹⁷⁹ Popper, p. 44

no less significant is the fact that it is not power as such to which Plato submits, but persuasive Reason and justice, and that neither his God nor, *a fortiori*, his martyred master, had coercive power over Necessity. It might be noted, also, that Plato wishes to dominate others, that he regards the mass of men as natively inferior beings who are, ideally, to be regulated in action and in thought, and that he himself lays down the aims which even the rulers are to regard. But here we should remember, from our earlier discussion, that Plato's handling of his guardians is in literary perspective; we could show, as we shall see below, that in fact he invests them with an ideal wisdom far beyond his own; even his wish to dominate the mass of men is mitigated by the desire to protect them from their own incapacity, and by his belief that they too, *sub specie aeternitatis*, are his equals. As for Plato's subjection of his own emotions and appetites to a rigid control suggestive of self-hate, plain to be seen is the qualifying fact that he condemns *per se* no impulse or appetite, but only its antisocial or excessive indulgence, and that he seeks rather to harmonize than to extirpate them.

Murphy's account of the processes by which authoritarians may be produced, unlike Fromm's list of criteria, is presented for use only in societies like our own, and Murphy should, therefore, not be held accountable for discrepancies resulting from an attempted transfer to the ancient world. Since, however, such transfers are all too likely to be made, we shall try to neutralize their injury to Plato. For if it should be argued that Plato carried with him throughout life beliefs and standards acquired in his youth, from Socrates, Solon, and perhaps from his father, it may be answered that these beliefs were certainly subjected to active criticism and interpretation, and that quite apart from their origin they have a right to be considered on their merits. If his picture of himself as "lawgiver" is held to indicate undesirable "anchorage" on the lawgiving aspect of the parent, and a love of rules for their own sakes, we may point to the fact that in the Greek world such a picture of oneself could arise in another way, from self-identification with the ancient, honorable and still surviving social role of lawgiver, and that this role perforce entailed the proposing of rules. To the suggestion that Plato's sense of isolation, through injury to his self-esteem, may have turned him toward moral perfectionism, we answer that conversely, Plato's persistent adherence to a moral ideal was itself promotive of isolation, a major cost borne by the moral reformer in any age. And if Plato's assertion of absolute standards of right and wrong is taken as equivalent to a naive realism, the most casual reading of the dialogues will show how far Plato was from a naive acceptance of traditional morality.

We see then that the strait-jacket of the "authoritarian personality" in its technical or semitechnical sense, cannot be made to fit Plato without very considerable alterations. He stands in fact far closer to the legitimate teacher recognized by Fromm. While for the common people it cannot be held that

Plato hoped to do more than benefit them from above, as head of his Academy and as the imagined educator of philosopher-rulers in the *Republic*, he was claiming an interim authority, which is legitimately exercised, as Fromm agrees, by any teacher who strives to assist his pupils to become rational independent beings and his own full equals. True, Plato shows a marked conservatism by extending the years of intellectual nonage well beyond the arrival of adulthood, but this fact need not blind us, as it has blinded Popper, to the goal he held in view.¹⁸⁰

Closely bordering upon this will to teach is that paternal impulse which Plato, in the absence of children of his own, seems to have extended to the people of his imaginary cities. We speak only of one aspect of Plato's feeling, for he stands to the citizens in many other relations; he is, after all, planning political communities complete with all the powers of enforcement. But something of the fatherly attitude was among his proudest contributions to civic law.¹⁸¹ Again with only modest hopes for his less gifted sons, he cherished a paternal dream that his more fortunately endowed offspring, both male and female, would rise to levels of excellence beyond his own. And in the prevision of such a family, working out, in harmonious and amicable interaction, the fulness of their respective powers, Plato must have felt some vicarious fulfilment of that impulse to create what is at once one's own and endowed with its own independent life, which Schilder finds at the heart of parenthood.

Our just completed construction of Plato's personality was inspired and dominated by the wish to show that one need not for lack of better accept Kelsen's and Popper's reading of Plato as a soul hungering and lusting after illicit power. One important piece of unfinished business remains. Can we, on our assumptions, account for those indications in Plato of undue certainty, intolerance of alternative views, and claim to expert knowledge of right rule, which fit with such facility into the Kelsen-Popper scheme?

We have already laid the broad foundations of our answer to this question in what was said of the relation of Plato to Socrates. From this standpoint

¹⁸⁰ For a discussion of Popper's charge that Plato wished to deprive even his philosopher kings of the freedom of critical thought, see Appendix XII, pp. 618ff.

¹⁸¹ The incompleteness of the parallel is further evidenced for those who accept the *Seventh Letter* as Plato's own by what is there said (331 B) of the writer's unwillingness to employ anything more than good counsel for the direction of a misguided son. Yet that Plato in his role as lawgiver conceived himself to be emulating also the good teacher and the good parent is shown with

particular clarity at *Laws* 857 E ff, esp 859 A, where he recommends that laws shall attempt to give wise counsel to the citizens about "what is noble, good, and just," and shall "resemble persons moved by love and wisdom, such as a father or mother," rather than to "order and threaten, like some tyrant or despot" (trans. Bury, Loeb Library). In this the Plato of the *Laws* is employing a metaphor and extending a principle approved by the Socrates of the *Crito*, 51 B, E (cf. p. 643 below) and of the *Apology*, 41 E (cf. p. 637).

two of the three qualities in question — certainty and intolerance — take on a somewhat different look: certainty becomes in great part the rapturous assent of a disciple to the authority of his master's vision, intolerance his effort to defend the cherished doctrine against all hostile comers. In putting the matter in this way, we are no doubt exaggerating; Plato was certainly not merely a disciple. But we suggest that if we have our eyes open to the increment of certainty and intolerance generated in this way, we will see a Plato importantly different from the man whom Kelsen and Popper have depicted.

Every moralist and every prophet, in proportion to the depth and intensity of his insight, in a manner becomes the "thing he contemplates," ever more closely identifying himself with the nature of the power in whose name he speaks. At its maximum, as in the Hebrew Prophets, the prophetic utterance is equated with the voice of God, the prophet saving his religious humility by assuming the role of the recipient and reporter of the divine word. Something of this sort, though more modest in its manner of expression, we have seen Socrates claim, when in the *Apology* he speaks of the command laid upon him by the god. Plato, as we read him, was a prophet of this same Delphic revelation, at one remove, his conviction confirmed by the testimony of a great life heroically ended. There is humility as well as generosity in the temper of a man who for many years attributes to another his own best and most deeply felt insights and ventures his most confident assertions only in this other's name.

We have postponed consideration until now of the third quality on the list of Plato's seeming vanities, the claim to expertness in government and legislation, because it differs somewhat from the other two. We have maintained that Socrates had, implicitly, presented himself as one with expert knowledge of the soul and its true interests, and in the *Crito*, as one qualified to speak of justice with authority, a claim which Plato with added emphasis repeated on his behalf. But he did not, so far as is known, develop an ideal constitution, nor devote particular attention to the study of laws. In the *Gorgias*, Socrates (if our view be accepted, it is Socrates speaking here) is shown demanding that moral knowledge shall be made the basis of the communal life, that statesmanship shall be directed not by the aim of giving the public what it wants but by some art or science of the health of the soul, devoted like medicine to securing the true good of those it serves.¹⁸² This demand, implying as it does the possibility of attainment, formed the point of departure for that development and systematization of the thought of Socrates which Plato felt it his duty to supply. In the *Republic* we see the Socratic premises, supplemented by Platonic insights, organized into an imposing structure and "rounded with the dream" of a complete and certain knowledge possessed by

¹⁸² In the *Euthydemus*, 290 B-292 E, a similar description of the "kingly art" is implied.

the ideal guardians. It is here that suspicion has arisen, reinforced by the appearance in the *Politicus* of an ideal Statesman; and the question is raised, to which we earlier promised to suggest an answer: was Plato, in describing these patterns of excellence and incarnations of eternal truth, who are fit to rule without check or trammel, tacitly defining himself?

We may answer without hesitation: "yes," in so far as by "himself" is meant Plato's ideal, the standard of excellence and aspiration to which he stood committed and which remained the ultimate goal of his pursuit. We may say "no," if reference is made to the actual Plato, as he stood at any period of his long life. We of course agree that in the *Laws*, behind the transparent mask of the Athenian Stranger, Plato presents himself as fitted to legislate for a new colony; for such a more limited enterprise, he felt himself in knowledge of actual laws at least equal, and in wisdom, by virtue of his Socratic moral principles, far superior, to any contemporary of his likely to be called upon for such services.

But with the rulers in the other two dialogues the case is different. The guardians in the *Republic* are set in a frame of ideality; in addition to their moral wisdom, they are provided with superlative skills, such as the ability to discern in the young child, even perhaps in the infant, the future dispositions and abilities of the adult, and the knowledge of the best genetic combinations; being by definition perfect rulers, why should they not possess all possible knowledge? In the *Politicus*, the situation is similar. No "divine shepherd" is available for the tending of the human flock. Nevertheless, an ideal standard of moral excellence exists, and the "Statesman" is the name given, *ex hypothesi*, to whoever — individual or small group — possesses the knowledge which can bring men in cities closer to this ideal standard (296 E–297 B, 300 D–E). Such knowledge must be continuously pursued, and as it is progressively discovered, must be permitted without let or hindrance to exercise authority over human life. Under existing circumstances, this knowledge is best applied to the framing or revising of legal constitutions, since men do not believe that there exists such a being as the true Statesman who could be trusted to rule without law (301 D–E). That Plato is thinking primarily of Socrates as the possessor of political knowledge is shown by the unquestioned reference to him (299 B–C); that Plato considered Socrates the "true politician" we know also from the *Gorgias*. Plato is claiming himself to be the "Statesman" only as the living representative of the Socratic knowledge of man's true good, and as the diligent student of the institutional means to its maximal attainment.

In neither dialogue is Plato the hero of his own tale. He is in a position like that of a physician (he himself would approve this analogy) who should write a pamphlet on "Medicine and Human Welfare," claiming that medical science possesses a beneficent knowledge in no way dependent for its validity upon the action of statesmen and parliaments, but able, potentially, to elimi-

nate contagious disease, reduce maternal and infant death rates almost to the vanishing point, and give every child an adequate diet, whether or no the governments of the world can be brought to contribute to it the necessary funds and authorization. Such a writer might believe that he himself, or another like him, approximated the human vehicle of "Medicine," without revealing a lust for personal power, or believing himself the Medicine Man in person.¹⁸³

And yet, in candor, we must make a small concession at this point to Plato's critics. The mind of Plato was a platform of dispute on which his hopes and aspirations, enkindled by the Socratic vision of the good life for man, declared with confidence, "The city of perfection must and can exist, and this is the plan of its building," while from the opposite quarter, his knowledge of life and of mortal frailty asserted with no less energy, "Such a blessed community, save under the rarest of favoring conditions, is not accessible to man—its pattern is laid up in heaven." It is not possible to deny that Plato in his dialogues on occasion permits himself to speak as if the external circumstances alone—perhaps a simple invitation to himself from a docile tyrant—were wanting for the immediate realization upon earth of the perfect community, in which a philosophic master of the "royal art" would be given an unhindered hand.¹⁸⁴ To avoid the error of taking this for his true meaning, it is necessary to bear in mind his own pronouncements in other more sober passages, and to strike the balance.

We reach the end of our consideration of Plato the man and personality. We may perhaps express the modest hope that during this long period of association, our acquaintance with Plato has progressed into something like an intimacy, bringing with it a greater appreciation of the very much in Plato that is highly admirable and a compensating understanding and forgiveness of what is not.

¹⁸³ We are here interested in Plato's ideas as expressions and revelations of his personality, and accordingly will forego any discussion of the validity of the ideas themselves. Please note also that in drawing our analogy between medicine and Plato's conception of the science of statesmanship, we

should not be understood as maintaining that medical values necessarily take precedence over all competing cultural interests.

¹⁸⁴ We have discussed a misunderstanding of this nature in connection with Plato's intentions in Sicily, pp. 374ff. above.



Was Plato a Totalitarian?

The Meaning of the Term

Unless we have been grossly misled, the theme of the chapter before us broaches what for most readers is quintessential to all contemporary discussion of Plato's thought. It is not, as the reader well knows, here first introduced; it has been the leitmotif running in and out of our whole argument. The question whether Plato was a totalitarian — whether his political ideal was substantially identical with whatever is held to be the common and distinctive basis of Fascism, Nazism, and Russian Communism — this question is, I think, certainly the hinge upon which turns the fate of Plato as a possible companion for the liberal intelligence of our time. An unqualified affirmative answer would deal him a staggering blow; as, *per contra*, a fair disclaimer on his behalf would go further perhaps than anything else, to restore a confidence which repeated accusations have gone far to destroy.

But first a word of apology, addressed jointly to Plato and to the reader. In the preceding chapters the order and substance of our argument was largely determined, as must always be true for the defender, by the tactics of the attackers. In consequence, our major task was the vindication of Plato the man, our minor concern was with Plato the thinker. The inherent injustice in this way of dealing with a professional thinker needs no further comment, but cries out for what, alas, is beyond our reach in the present book — full treatment of the various areas of Plato's thought from ethics to metaphysics. Such an undertaking seemed demanded by the depreciatory comments upon his philosophical achievements, and on several occasions we have given at least an implicit answer, or have suggested the line that could be followed in a full reply. But in the main we have left the performance of this service to other and more technically competent hands, and shall limit ourselves to meeting the spearhead of the present attack.¹

In discussing Plato's relation to totalitarianism we are, be it noted, no

¹ An evaluation of Fite's criticism of Platonic ethical theory appears as Appendix XIII, pp 620f.

longer replying only to Crossman's severe but scrupulous condemnation or to Fite's ironical deflations and sprightly innuendoes; we no longer enjoy the luxury of answering charges which are the private imaginings of an extravagant accuser such as Popper. Although these specific attackers will not be forgotten and Popper's voice will continue to be heard rising above the rest, we shall not be content to have answered them alone. It is, in fact, not only the enemies of Plato who must be met on this issue, but on occasion also some among those who would count themselves in principle his friends. We shall assume, therefore, that our reader is already numbered among these friends, or that we have in large part made our case with him against the detractors, in favor of Plato the man. The issue is sharply focussed: was Plato, however honest, and however single-mindedly devoted to his aims, nevertheless an instance of the noxious breed of totalitarians?

Our first business is with this particular word, and our first concern must be to avoid falling into one or another of the several "word-traps" that lie directly along our way. There is spread temptingly before us the possibility of accepting complacently the public meaning of our term as specified in the latest edition of the most authoritative dictionary. The 1951 edition of Webster's International offers the following definition of "totalitarian": "Of or pertaining to a highly centralized government under the control of a political group which allows no recognition of or representation to other political parties, as in Fascist Italy or in Germany under the Nazi regime."² Now that is certainly an admirable formulation or fixation of current usage, clear, self-consistent, and as far as it goes, unobjectionable. But even so, we may not appeal to it as our platinum bar of measurement. It remains on a level of such particularity as to be applicable only to the contemporary political scene. And if we should attempt to remedy this defect by remodeling Webster's definition into some such form as "of or pertaining to government by a small, rigorously limited governing group which allows no voice in the determination of policy to any other group within the state," we should then have a definition of our term undeniably applicable to Plato but now so ample in its generality as to embrace indifferently all forms of narrowly-based authoritarian government known to man.

One other definition deserves mention here, seldom employed in its strict purity in popular or even in technical discussion, but undoubtedly valid and important and, in addition, admirably suited to the making of what is from our standpoint a distinction of sovereign importance. A clearcut instance of this use is provided by a recent authoritative writer on political theory who describes Russian Communism and Fascism alike as "totalitarian in the sense that they obliterated the distinction between areas of private judgment and of

² By permission. From *Webster's New International Dictionary*, Second Edition, copyright, 1934, 1939, 1945, 1950, by G. & C. Merriam Co.

public control.”³ And just here we wish to assert, as conspicuously as can be managed, that if anyone is willing to employ the term “totalitarian” deliberately and scrupulously within the area of meaning thus defined, reserving all questions concerning the nature and purpose of the state which is to exercise such comprehensive regulation over the citizen, then it is permissible and indeed necessary to call Plato by this most dangerous of names. To the defense and illustration of this “agreement” between ourselves and Plato’s critics, we shall later return. Here we remark, however, that in this sense, as in that we just now adapted from Webster, the term is applicable to a very wide range indeed of political systems.

What most of us have in mind, however, when the word is pronounced, may be illustrated from those formulations of the meaning of totalitarianism that took their origin in the warfare of ideas waged for more than two decades by the leaders of democratic thought against their ideological and military enemies in Italy and Germany and, with an armistice of mutual alliance, against Russian Communism. Vigorous efforts were made to discover a complex of essential characteristics capable of serving as a common denominator for the first two, or for all three of these political systems, and able also to differentiate them from other autocracies on the one hand and from what is held to be the essence of democracy or of liberalism, on the other. In examining any collection of such descriptions, one notes a considerable community, qualified by a wide difference in emphasis — they are not all built around the same center — and by variation in the traits chosen for mention. This unity in diversity may be illustrated by several such descriptions, drawn from the writings of men who are unquestionably qualified representatives of the liberal and democratic faith, and who are, moreover, not centrally involved in the current conflict over Plato.⁴ These we have abbreviated with care to prevent distortion and present here as sample formulations by responsible observers of the central meaning of the term today.

Totalitarianism has been described, with special reference to Nazism and Fascism, as a fabric of three strands: (1) nationalism, (2) the doctrine of the racial superiority of the people in question, and (3) emphasis upon a ruler, conceived as the embodiment of power, and a small group of elite surrounding him and combining with him to enforce a strict discipline upon the masses; when Communism alone is considered, the first two traits are omitted.⁵ Another writer holds totalitarianism to be the combination of two primary elements: (1) authoritarianism, or a strong forceful government, centered in a single person or in a minority group, either for the sake of pragmatic efficiency or on the ground that the state should be governed by

thing in objectivity by choosing almost at random from the available list.

⁴ Adapted from *Ideas and Men*, by Crane Brinton, 1940, pp 471-472, p. 489.

³ George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, 1950, p 905

⁴ At the risk of seeming arbitrary in our choice of authorities, we may gain some-

the wise few; (2) "etatism," or the doctrine that the state is an end in itself to which individual interests must be subordinated or sacrificed, and in the interests of which all individual liberties must be abolished.⁶

A professional philosopher and veteran interpreter and defender of democracy presents an interesting four-fold definition of this "catch-word," whose meaning, he tells us, is largely "emotive": (1) uniformitarianism, the enforcement by the state of an all-pervasive creed which supplies the sovereign aim, whether this be the service of God, national aggrandisement, or some international cause; (2) anti-intellectualism, the dethronement of reason in favor of the belief that will and emotion give validity to thought; (3) tribalism, or the determination of all values by the collective: truth and other norms are regarded as intracultural or intranational and the state becomes the supreme moral end; (4) technologism, or the worship as an end in itself of whatever "works" or is efficient.⁷

As previously remarked, these definitions or descriptions have much in common, though they are differently centered and not in full agreement as to which traits must necessarily be included. But all alike, since they attempt to get at the irreducible minimum, fail to express the cloud of connotations which for most users surround the word, and contribute largely to its emotional aura. Concentration camps, sudden disappearances of persons not known to have committed any crime, "purgings" even of those in high authority, death by starvation and cold, by poison gas and firing squad; great mass meetings and the emotional elevation of the leader and the cause, and as the counterparts of these, hostility to supposed enemies, the glorification of war or of permanent revolution — all these are psychologically inseparable from our concept of totalitarianism, as the reader will probably agree. And in addition there is a group of traits, no longer central but well remembered as having formed part of the program of one or more of the totalitarian regimes, such as the encouragement of illicit sex relations for the purpose of breeding "heroes," or the attempt to alienate children from their parents for purposes of indoctrination. Some shadows of these survive in the word as we use it and help to identify and to blacken its meaning.

Meanwhile we must not lose sight of what our familiar detractors have told us of their various conceptions of totalitarianism. All of them, to the degree of their interest in political matters, are of course affronted by totalitarianism. But they differ from such advocates of the liberal faith as the authorities previously listed in that their conceptions of totalitarianism are in each case centered in some group of traits which they believe central also to Plato's political thought. Crossman presents an anomaly in that he has not accused Plato of being on all fours with the totalitarians, being careful always

⁶ Similarly adapted from *From Luther to Hitler*, by W. M. McGovern, 1941, pp. 14-17.

⁷ From "The Philosophical Roots of

Totalitarianism," by R. B. Perry, in *The Roots of Totalitarianism*, by MacIver, Bonn, and Perry, 1940, pp. 20-31.

to distinguish Plato's aim of virtue and happiness for all from the crass or brutal aims of the modern dictators, and even from the unjust and mistaken purposes of the ruling classes of the so-called "democracies." Yet he regards as basic both to Plato and to communism and fascism the belief that the common man cannot be trusted to participate in self-direction, and must therefore be subtly controlled by propaganda; as further common traits, he points to Plato's recommendation that an elite shall be selected and trained to do the necessary directing, and he detects in Plato a willingness to employ propaganda devices and government policies of any degree of falsity, injustice, and cruelty. Crossman also believes, though he does not make this part of Plato's kinship with totalitarianism, that Plato was guilty of racialism of a sort in proposing that membership in the governing class be made the hereditary monopoly of chosen persons of birth and wealth.⁸

To Fite the basis of Russian Communism is the worship of organizational efficiency for the sake of economic success, just as other hierarchical systems, like the Roman Empire, an army, or an American business corporation are organized with a view solely to efficiency in the pursuit of their respective aims. Plato's aim, so Fite declares, is "distinction in war, if not . . . conquest," and his design for the ideal city is merely the expression of "technological efficiency" in its pursuit. On another page, Fite identifies as "true Platonism" the Russian Communist belief that the correct opinion on all subjects should be determined by those in authority and publicly proclaimed for docile acceptance by all; in this connection we recall also Fite's contentions that the "freedom" of Plato's citizens is no more than a "habitual respect for authority," and that the Republic is, except for the handful of rulers, a city of "greedy children," kept in order solely by external restraints. Fite draws no further parallels between Plato and any totalitarian regime; he does, however, believe he has found in Plato's state various traits, such as the just-mentioned militarism, admiration for Sparta, and the cynical deception and exploitation of the common people, which those who see Plato as the proto-Nazi have charged against him.⁹

We may recall also the identification of Plato as a "totalitarian reformer" by Neurath and Lauwerys. They have succinctly declared that for Plato, as for Hitler, "the main purpose of the state is to preserve the purity of the race and to organize the people for war."¹⁰

Popper has directed far more detailed attention to the problem and brought against Plato a correspondingly more systematically articulated charge. In Popper's value system, the making by individuals of free moral choices is of paramount importance, and correlative with this is the requirement that these choices shall be humanitarian, looking to the achievement of freedom and to the abolition of pain, so far as possible, for all men every-

⁸ Crossman, e.g., pp. 172-179, esp. p. 179; 232, 247-249; 281.

147-148, 29-30, 137-138

⁹ For the reference to Neurath and Lauwerys, see n. 91, p. 411.

¹⁰ Fite, pp. 216-219; 244, 80-81, 304;

where.¹¹ The chief obstacle to the realization of these values he has found in advocacy of the "closed society." This advocacy, combined with certain other doctrines, he would apparently call "totalitarianism"; yet to this word, frequent throughout his book, he nowhere assigns a definition. We are compelled, therefore, to gather together the various separate qualities which he has assigned to it, to make up a ten-fold description, as follows: (1) "historicism," or the doctrine that historical events are determined by inexorable laws; (2) Spartanism, the exaltation and imitation of Spartan institutions and ideals; (3) "holism," or the belief that the interest of the group or the collective is the criterion of morality, and that it entirely supersedes the welfare of the individual; (4) the doctrine of racial superiority; (5) advocacy of the direction of the state by a specially trained and disciplined ruling class; (6) the "closing" of the society, or the attempt to stabilize the state and to give security and peace to its members by predetermining all their choices and beliefs; (7) readiness to employ violence for achieving radical reforms; (8) inhumanity; (9) the recommendation of "autarky," to keep out the liberalizing effect of trade; and (10) militarism, exercised against neighboring states, employed to unify the people and to prevent the entry of liberal beliefs from outside sources. All these traits, or modifications of them, Popper believes to be actively present in Plato's political thought.¹² There follows as a necessary consequence the obligation of denouncing Plato as a totalitarian and as the fountainhead of political evil, likely unless checked to continue spreading his dangerous infection in the modern world.¹³

Ten Proposed Measures of Plato's Guilt

We have before us, now, all the materials necessary for the hearing that it is our intention to conduct. We shall deal first with the descriptions of totalitarianism which we have assembled from the detractors, analyzing these into their separate components and weighing Plato's "guilt" under each, then measuring the degree of his conformity to each of the descriptions in question taken as a whole. It will then be a matter of no great difficulty to show in similar fashion his relation to totalitarianism as formulated by our non-partisans. What should emerge from all this, we trust, will be a reasonably

¹¹ Popper, pp. 65-66, 508-509.

¹² For Popper's description of these elements of totalitarianism and his attribution of them to Plato see, e.g., on historicism, pp. 5-8, 11-13, 25-27, 37-40, 486-488; on Spartanism, pp. 42, 47-55; on holism or "tribalism," pp. 12, 97-105, 468, 537; on racialism, pp. 50-52, 81-83; on the ruling class or "caste," pp. 47-55, 86-87; on the "closing" and the benevolent reasons for it, pp. 86-87, 132-133, 166-167; on radicalism

and violence, pp. 161-163, 194; on inhumanity, pp. 48-49, 52, 564-567; on Plato's recommendation of autarky, and on the reasons for autarky and conquest by totalitarian states today, pp. 86-87, 177-178. On p. 36 he declares roundly, "It is the totalitarian tendency of Plato's political philosophy which I shall try to analyze, and to criticize."

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. v, vii, 7, 36-37.

objective judgment upon the question whether the term "totalitarianism" as employed by responsible observers, and Plato as interpreted with corresponding care, can be conjoined without a contradiction.

What the reader of the section that follows may expect is neither simple denial nor confession on Plato's behalf. Our earlier expressions of indignation at what we felt, and still feel, to be the perverse exaggeration of the detractors must not cause the reader to expect that we are undertaking a total refutation of their claims. In point of fact, our findings with regard to the separate components of Plato's alleged totalitarianism will show the widest possible range of result, from total contradiction of individual items to almost complete agreement, through an important middle range in which likeness and difference are in virtual equilibrium. It may be that our result will please neither friend nor foe, but we must resolutely attempt to set partisan considerations to one side and, adapting the Platonic precept, follow the argument wherever it may lead.

"Historicism." — The first of the proposed criteria which we shall consider is "historicism," a charge of Popper's devising which he stands alone in urging. For this reason and because its consideration will require prolonged attention to detail, we shall pass rather rapidly over it in our text, referring the interested reader to Appendix XIV.¹⁴ To claim prophetic knowledge of the course of history, derived from a knowledge of the "laws" which govern its movement, is to be what Popper calls a "historicist." The moral harm entailed is twofold: the historicist will allow the supposed "laws" to determine his ends, and, further, will be in danger of excusing himself from strenuous attempts to remove evils; for he will be tempted to believe such efforts either superfluous, if in accord with destiny, or, if they invite to action contrary to destiny, futile.

That Popper has not adhered to the rules of judicial logic and equity in his manner of affixing the guilt of historicism upon Plato will be seen from a simple analysis of the structure of his argument. He has made his definition and claimed Plato as coming under it by virtue of his belief (ascribed to him by Popper) that "all social change is . . . degeneration." Popper has thus by implication fastened upon Plato the guilt of resigning his rights and duties in the choice of ends, and shuffling off responsibility for action upon the law of destiny. But presently we find him charging Plato with wholesale "social engineering" in an effort to "arrest change." But, but, one must exclaim, this second charge annuls at least one half of the first! For it shows Plato manfully shouldering the moral responsibility of a great decision, made to counteract the entropy of historical decay,¹⁵ and should wring from Popper

¹⁴ Appendix XIV, p. 622ff., deals with Popper's charge against Plato of historicism.

¹⁵ Popper's new charge, added in his

second edition, that Plato believed himself the predestined turner about of the world's moral weather (discussed on our pp. 463-465 above) will not solve the difficulties of

iron praise such as should be paid to a Henleian "Invictus" or a Russellian "Free Man," "building his temple on the unyielding foundation of despair." In the face of Plato's marked deviation from the type of the historicist as described by Popper himself, Popper's perseverance in affixing this label may be fairly called an egregious example of another wrong he has charged upon Plato. Popper has turned, for the moment, into a "methodological essentialist," treating "historicism" as a kind of Platonic Idea, which retains its essential identity and essential harmfulness under all its varying phenomenal disguises.

What, now, of the other half of obloquy, that which is incurred by permitting ends to be determined by the sheer givenness of the march of historical events? We cannot see how this fault can remain in one who has, by Popper's own supposition, taken it upon himself to call the reversal of history a good, and to adopt it as the supreme goal of endeavor. And again assuming that Plato ever made the supposed adoption, how could anyone know that it was Plato's adoption of this goal that dictated his values, and not his antecedent conception of the good that prompted him to accept it as a worthy goal? But we ourselves, relying upon conclusions reached at an earlier stage of our argument, have no need of speculatively inferring Plato's concept of "good" from what he might have thought about history, since we can see it so unambiguously emerging out of the interaction of his moral consciousness with the ethical ideals of Socrates.¹⁶

Now, as we have shown at some length in our Appendix, the various Platonic texts that genuinely encourage the idea that Plato regarded the earlier as *eo ipso* the better, are disputable in point of doctrinal seriousness, while other passages are made to support the thesis only by forced interpretation and neglect of context. It is also true, unfortunately for the strength of Popper's case, that we never find that Plato thought of applying a historical measuring-stick to events and personalities of the known past or of the living present. His ethical teaching is indeed permeated by the belief in the possibility of attaining in the present, by strenuous effort, justice and philosophical insight. These views are out of line, both positively and negatively, with what Plato should believe, if for him, as Popper's theory requires, the historical principle were the great and overarching law of human destiny.

We can go further. The *argumentum ex silentio* is crowned by a number

his position. It of course implies that Plato conceived his own Utopian engineering as predestined by historical necessity, and to this extent, if true, adds to the consistency of Plato's presumed historicism. But it still leaves Popper under the necessity of showing that Plato believed all past change to have been preponderantly degenerative; moreover, since Popper teaches that, for

Plato, the world's new age was to be static, it still requires him to demonstrate that, in Plato's ideal cities, there would be no change. Neither of these propositions can be supported, as our next few pages will show.

¹⁶ Cf. pp. 400-402, with cross-references, and Appendix XVI, pp. 632ff.

of clear positive examples. At the beginning of the third book of the *Laws*, Plato has, so to say, opened the door of his study at the Academy to permit us to see some of the results of his historical and archaeological research. He is proposing to throw light upon the origins of governments by a long-time survey of the ways in which cities change for better or for worse. Plato is operating with a theory of "cultural catastrophism": through the vast, perhaps infinite reaches of time past, civilized communities have arisen by slow steps from rude beginnings to various degrees of cultural maturity (he formulates no periodic law requiring perfection at any point), and then, through the agency of catastrophic floods, plagues, and the like, have been thrown back to their primitive conditions. Applying this theory to his own epoch, he imagines that after "the great flood" our species was represented only by certain "scanty embers of the human race," consisting for the most part of "herdsmen of the hills," men of simple virtue, but destitute of almost all knowledge of the mechanical and social arts. The account reaches its peak of interest from our point of view at 678 B, where we read: "Do we imagine, my good Sir, that the men of that age, who were unversed in the ways of city life — many of them noble, many ignoble, — were perfect either in virtue or in vice?" That this was impossible the interlocutor heartily agrees. And Plato continues, "As time went on and our race multiplied, all things advanced — did they not? — to the condition which now exists . . . not all at once, but by small degrees, during an immense space of time." This, need one say, is a picture of cultural ascent, a process which entails much evil, but is necessary to the achievement of the highest human excellence. The idea of the increasing possibility of humanly directed progress is carried out in the whole plan of the *Laws*, which seeks, finds, and then attempts to implement in legislation designed for an actual city, the basic principles of good government, and, as England has called it, "the secret of political vitality." And Plato adds to his projected legislation the expression of his hope (*Laws* 769 D-E) that later lawgivers may amend his work, "in order that the constitution . . . he has organized may always grow better, and never in any way worse."¹⁷

To take what constitutes perhaps the clearest and most overwhelming example, we can quote once again the progressive optimism of *Republic* 424 A, which contemplates, on the basis of a proper social order once set in operation, progress from generation to generation of better and better men in a better and better city. To Plato's standpoint as herein expressed, the last word to suggest itself as applicable would be Popper's word "historicism."

"Backward, my brave Spartiates! One collective leap backward and the frozen future will be ours!" These are Plato's marching orders to his regi-

¹⁷ The several quotations in this paragraph are from Bury's translation of the

Laws in the Loeb Classical Library.

ment of political reactionaries, stated at great length in the *Republic*, and repeated with no essential change in his other political writings — so they are interpreted for us with varying emphasis by most of Plato's recent critics. Our earlier exposition of their views will permit us here to rival the brevity of the slogan-maker. Popper sees Plato's goal as paradise regained, with slight pseudosophical improvements, by means of the construction on the model of Sparta and Crete of a still more immobile society whose leading principle is "arrest all change."¹⁸ Toynbee, to whose analysis Popper has expressed some indebtedness, speaks of the *Republic* as a desperate attempt to "peg" a disintegrating city-state at the level of an "arrested society" such as Sparta, "worked out to logical extremes" and directed by a "sovereign intellectual caste" of philosophers.¹⁹ Crossman and Fite, while they do not employ the concept of social arrest, are not far behind the others in their emphasis on Plato's dependence upon the Spartan model.²⁰

If our discussion appears to have strayed from its official track of totalitarianism, a word of explanation: among our detractors, Popper has brought Spartanism and "arrestment" into intimate relations with the totalitarian state through the concept of the "closed society," which for him is a description applicable alike to Sparta, Plato, and the dictatorships of our time. (The other elements of this conception of the closed society will be separately discussed below.) And to Popper we must add Toynbee, who starting from the resemblance between Plato's state and the "arrested" societies of Sparta and the 'Osmanli Turks, was brought, *via* a consideration of the function of censorship in assuring stability, to compare the *Republic* with Nazism and the U.S.S.R.

Of the two elements comprising this charge we may dispose at once of the suspicion that Plato was an archaist, aiming primarily to reproduce the pattern of the past. In Popper's scheme "archaist" is "historicist," and we have given our reasons for regarding this latter term as inapplicable to Plato. Toynbee, though he has not here applied the word "archaist" to Plato, has undoubtedly applied the meaning. Classifying Plato's cities of the *Republic* and the *Laws* among the literary Utopias, he lays it down that in common with others of their class they express only the felt need to arrest the downward movement of the society within which they were produced; their authors can aim no higher than "holding the ground which has been won for them by their fathers."²¹ As evidence, Toynbee points to the passage in the

¹⁸ Popper, pp. 42, 46-55, and *passim*.

¹⁹ Toynbee's views have been described on our pp. 583-585. The relevant passage for our purpose here is vol. III, pp. 90-99.

²⁰ Crossman, pp. 114-117; Fite, pp. 142-148, 266.

²¹ Toynbee, III, p. 89. One Utopia, that

of More, Toynbee exempts from this stigma, expressing his astonishment (p. 90 n.) that in an age when the admiration of Greek models stood so high, More was able to resist the restrictive prejudices of Plato and Aristotle to so great a degree, and to espouse "the opposite ideal of elasticity and growth."

discriminating reply. If sustained, the charge would find Plato guilty of taking over bodily from Sparta the basic institutions of his ideal city,²³ in so doing choosing the baser part of Spartan boorishness, brutality, and authoritarian narrowness in preference to Athenian humanity and liberality, and by his example and prestige launching on its long career the myth of Sparta, which, it is affirmed, "had a great part in framing the doctrines of . . . national Socialism" and other similar systems of false values²⁴

Fortunately we are not left to infer Plato's outlook upon Sparta from his discussion of other themes. There are many texts, but none more illuminating than the account in *Republic*, Book VIII (547 B ff.) of the deterioration of the ideal state into the species of state called "timocracy," of which Sparta has been named as an example, and the description of this state and its typical citizen. To my reading, the most interesting thing about this passage is the ambivalence of its attitude toward the Spartan way of life. We note the high formal honor implied by its immediate derivation from the perfect state,

²³ Crossman and Fife have been some what less unfair than this implies, acknowledging to some degree Plato's divergencies from Sparta — Popper, p. 42, asserts, what would be difficult to document, that "most of Plato's excellent description of their institutions" (i.e., the Spartans' and Cretans') "is given in certain parts of his description of the best state, to which timocracy is so similar" (Timocracy is the name Plato has assigned to the type of state to which Sparta belonged). Purporting to be summarizing Plato's description of the sequence of states which originate successively from the ideal city, Popper then omits Plato's actual description of timocracy completely, except for mention of its ambition and its instability, and goes on to describe the transition to oligarchy, into which it degenerates. In this way he avoids the necessity of appraising the reader that Plato, in further vital respects, condemns and reprobates the Spartan form of government, an omission which in the circumstances, amounts to suppression of evidence.

²⁴ The quotation is from Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, Simon and Schuster, New York 1945. Popper has said much the same, p. 42. Few if any contemporary critics have equaled Bertrand Russell in the strength of his conviction expressed in the book named, that the *Republic* is of Spartan inspiration. The curious feature of Russell's presentation of his case is this: after two preliminary chapters on "The Influence of Sparta" and "The Sources

of Plato's Opinions," in which he declares in the roundest terms that the *Republic* is of purest Spartan pedigree (pp. 94, 104-105), and highly "illiberal," we come to a chapter on "Plato's Utopia" in which Sparta receives but one mention. Russell makes the assertion — not extravagant in itself, though open to reasonable doubt — that Plato's city "will almost certainly produce no art or science, because of its rigidity", he then adds, "in this respect, as in others, it will be like Sparta" (p. 115, italics ours). What these other points of identity may be, we are left to conjecture. From Russell's general comments on Plato's ethical standpoint, pp. 115-118, we should conclude that Russell condemns Plato chiefly as believing in an objective standard of goodness, the knowledge of which is attainable by some few wise persons, not by all, which is to be employed as the basis of social organization in preference to the consensus of opinion or the arbitrament of force, and to this again we need not object. But Russell's scornful and indignant depiction of an inhumane, militaristic, and benighted Sparta, and of a Plato aping and admiring it without reservation has added to the indictment many counts which, being left unsupported by specific argument or evidence, are unfairly set beyond the reach of reasoned rebuttal by Plato's defender. We shall be forced, therefore, to meet these shadowy arguments indirectly, by exhibiting their conclusions as incompatible with what we hope to establish as true.

which ranks it two degrees above democracy. And that the honor is not wholly formal appears from Plato's specific approval of certain of its characteristic features, such as the respect for rulers, the exclusion of the warriors from all gainful pursuits, and the institution of the common meals for men. Though not enamoured of the philosophic Muse, they have a certain love of music. But, as the most casual reading of the record shows, this is by no means the whole account. The defects of timocracy are many, and, as our general knowledge of Plato's standards allows us to say, severe. Timocracy is born of what Plato everywhere deplures, the love of gain, which overmasters some of the rulers of the ideal state; the resulting struggle terminates in the betrayal of the interests of those "of whose freedom they had been the guardians" (547 B-C). As Plato elsewhere in the *Republic* tells us (416 A-417 B), from now on they will be the "enemies and masters" of their former fellow citizens, "hating and being hated, plotting and being plotted against . . . fearing far more and rather the townsmen within than the foemen without," and, as if to mark their utter contrast to Plato's philosopher kings, transformed from trusty shepherd dogs to "wolves." They become preeminently contentious, ambitious, and preoccupied with war, in which they spend the greater part of their time (548 A, 549 A). These timocrats have further vices of which Plato has shown his detestation and scorn: clandestine violation of law (548 B), "fierce secret lust for gold and silver" finding gratification in "private nests in which they can lavish their wealth" upon their favorites (548 A-B). He marks their harsh treatment of slaves and subservience to superiors, and the absence from their souls of "that best guardian, . . . reason blended with culture."²⁵ These, manifestly, are not the sentiments of an undiluted Spartophile.

Not only does the *Republic* comment directly upon timocracy. There are also implicit criticisms, favorable and unfavorable, embodied in the institutions of the ideal city. As the detractors have noted, there are similarities to be observed: the unquestioned, willing acceptance of the order of ruling and being ruled, in Plato's city, corresponding to the outward Spartan respect for rulers and for law; the division of the population into the two distinct groups of guardians and workers, corresponding, formally, to the Spartan division into Spartiates and their classes of servile helpers; the prohibition of gold and silver (albeit somewhat differently managed in the two cases); the communal life of the guardians, which can be regarded as an extension of the Spartan messes; the "sacred marriages," remotely resembling the Spartan sanctioning of occasional extramarital relations for eugenic purposes, and the delegation to the state of the power of deciding which infants are to be reared, a decision at Athens apparently exercised by the father.²⁶ The public educa-

²⁵ 549 A-B The translations in this paragraph are from Shorey, Loeb Library, slightly altered.

²⁶ Some of Plato's critics, e.g., Popper, would add the "Glauconic Edict" of *Republic* 463 C. We have given our reasons for

tion of both sexes can be viewed as an extension and development of the Spartan precedent; the inuring of the young to the spectacle of war is much in the spirit of Spartan training; and the list could be enlarged by many minor particulars.

But we cannot fairly weigh the significance of these common traits until we have observed the alterations Plato has introduced into almost every item. Whereas at Sparta the land, the houses, the very persons of the lowest class of the population belonged to the Spartiates and were administered and exploited for their exclusive benefit, Plato's guardians own nothing individually and as a group receive board-wages only. Their social function is to serve the common welfare (*Republic* 416 C ff., 420 B ff.); their living together in common is an expression of this purpose and a guarantee of its scrupulous fulfillment. Plato's education includes women, up to its topmost reaches; it lays far more stress upon music, and subordinates gymnastic to the building of character; it is to be conducted by persuasion and play (536 E) and not by the harsh, resentment-provoking methods of the Spartan disciplinarians (548 B-C). Music is to be strictly censored, but it is noteworthy that Plato retains as the two permitted modes of music not only the mode suited to the brave man, steadfast in toils and dangers, but also that suited to that same man living the life of peace, persuading or teaching, or listening with open mind to the persuasions of another, "not bearing himself arrogantly, but in all this acting modestly and moderately and acquiescing in the outcome."²⁷ Though Plato's guardians are to be tested in endurance of toils and pains (413 D), he lays no Spartan stress on suffering, and his citizens, unlike Spartans, are to be exposed also to the suasions of pleasure and to be tested for their ability to resist its charms (413 E). The very censorship is different in spirit, aiming at building an ordered soul (411 E-412 A) rather than at courage alone and conformity. And above all, there is the higher program of studies with which Plato crowns the education of his guardians, both men and women, a thing as far beyond even the highest level of Spartan culture as metaphysical speculation transcends the narrow boundaries of traditional common sense. The vision of the good thus reached is the ultimate sovereign authority in Plato's state, as against the blind tyranny of unalterable law. Despite the similarities, and despite the admiration which Plato, like Socrates before him, feels for the Spartans' virtues, the ad-

regarding Glaucon's legislative proposal as a *jeu d'esprit*, pp. 95-96. — The question of the exposure of infants at Athens has been discussed on pp. 195ff.

²⁷ *Republic* 399 A-B, Shorey's trans., Loeb Library. The existence of this second mode in Plato's state would never be guessed by any reader who should rely on Popper for a picture of Plato's proposed

use of music. On p. 54 and again on p. 501 he denies the existence in Plato's scheme of any modes except such as are designed to "make the young . . . braver, i.e. fiercer," and then speaks of Plato's views as "almost incredible in their superstitious intolerance." Our comment must be that Plato's rather wrong prescriptions have been wrongly represented.

miration is matched by condemnation, and the similarities are offset by enormous differences in structure, spirit, and aim.

We have still to comment upon the severe censure of the Athenian democracy which Plato implies by placing the Spartan state, with all its recognized flaws, so high above it in his scheme of cities. Undoubtedly he does mean to express his decided preference over democracy for timocracy, abstractly defined as the pursuit of honor rather than of indiscriminate desire. But when the two forms are corrupted into lawless perversions of themselves, the case is altered. In the *Politicus* (302 E f.) the assertion occurs that democracy or the rule of the many, when accompanied with law, falls below the level of the rule of the few with law, and is the least approvable of lawful forms of government; but Plato adds that among the lawless forms, lawless democracy is best, as capable of working the least harm. If we may read the *Republic* in the light of this principle that degree of obedience to law is an essential measure of constitutional excellence, we can explain why, in spite of its official position in the *Republic* so far below timocracy, it does not receive a correspondingly severe arraignment. If we compare the detailed descriptions of the several states, we see plainly that while the democratic man has stirred Plato's ironic contempt, the oligarch and the timocrat have moved his deep moral indignation. If our parallel with the *Politicus* be accepted, this would be because, inconsistently with his avowed intention of exhibiting each one of them at first in its uncorrupted form, Plato has allowed himself to train the batteries of his criticism upon their lawless (and familiar) manifestations.

The impression of Plato's estimate of Sparta which is left by the *Republic* is confirmed and its detailed evidential foundation greatly extended by a reading of the *Laws*.²⁸ Having doffed the mask of "Socrates" and donned that of the "Athenian," Plato is again alternately, almost simultaneously, praising and blaming the Spartan state and, it should be observed, subjecting Athens to a like treatment. We find in the *Laws* an intricate compound of Spartan institutions and those of the Athenian, particularly the older Athenian constitution, rectified by some political inventions of his own, the whole being informed and directed by Socratic-Platonic moral values.

Although the *Laws* distinguishes no more sharply than did the *Republic* between the "Lycurgan" constitution conceived as operating in its pristine perfection and the realities of fourth-century Spartan life, it is quite clear

²⁸ As we have said, Plato does not tell us in the *Politicus* where he would classify Sparta, which apparently would hover uneasily between the types, both as to the number of rulers and as to lawfulness or lawlessness. Other Platonic dialogues need not detain us long. *Crito* 52 E is an indication of Socrates' appreciation of Spartan obedience to law, and also of Spartan law

itself, though in what respects we are not told. *Protagoras* 342 A ff. satirizes the superficiality of Athenian Spartophiles who ape the outside of Spartanism by wearing short cloaks and displaying cauliflower ears. The ascription, in the same passage, of a profound but riddling wisdom to the Spartans, is of course a pleasantry.

that Plato's approvals pertain to the earlier time. He approved the structural complexity or balance of the Spartan constitution, seeing in it an instance of that "mixed" state, tempering "monarchy" with "democracy," which he so highly valued, and which he had found exemplified also in the older Athens and in Persia under Cyrus the Great. He praised it also as aiming at the virtue of its citizens, though, to be sure, only at the fourth and least important part of complete virtue. Among his imitative adoptions, in each case with some modification, these may be listed: (1) the equality and inalienability of the land-lots, a further democratization of the structural basis of the Lycurgan system; (2) the common meals, extended by Plato to women also; (3) prohibition to the citizens of participation in trade and commerce, of travel or communication with foreigners except under severe restrictions, and of the use of a common coinage; (4) censorship of all art and literature; and (5) the encouragement of marriage (of the usual sort) and of the production of children in proper numbers and of good endowment; (6) and (7) universal public education and military training, adopted from Sparta with drastic changes immediately to be noted.²⁰

Turning to the departures from Spartan precedent, some of which will be seen to be identical with those observed in the *Republic*, we may list the following:

(1) The classes of inhabitants. — The citizens proper are equal, as at Athens, except for a property qualification for certain offices, similar to a provision of Solon's.²⁰ The highest office in the state, however, that of Law-

²⁰ References in the *Laws* for these similarities with Sparta are as follows: (1) 745 D, 740, 741 B; (2) 780 A-781 D; (3) 919 D, 953 A-C, 950 D, 942 A; (4) 801, 817, 829; (5) 721 B-C, 783 D-E; (6) Book VII, 804 C-D; (7) 942-943.

The restrictions which Plato imposes upon the admission of strangers to the city of the *Laws* and upon foreign travel by its citizens are certainly un-Athenian and illogical, but it is perhaps worth noting that they are in large part un-Spartan also; here as elsewhere Plato has consciously refused to adopt unaltered the Spartan way. He will, it is true, keep visitors to the city under supervision, yet they are to be admitted and made welcome (952 D ff.). Delegations as "numerous, honorable and good as possible" are to be sent to the various Hellenic games and congresses of peace (950 E). And approved citizens above the age of fifty are to be allowed to travel abroad at will (951 B ff.), though when they return they are to make no unfavorable comparisons of their own city's laws with those

they have seen elsewhere, except in their confidential reports to the Night Council (cf. our p. 517). Plato believes that thus his city will avoid both stagnation and blind adherence to tradition (951 B-C), and will escape the bad reputation of the Spartans among the rest of mankind as "boorish and harsh" (950 B).

²⁰ The detailed provisions relating to voting, eligibility to vote and to stand for election, the use of the lot, and the like, regarding each particular office, are too complex for exposition here. The reader is referred to the valuable monograph by A. H. Chase, "The Influence of Athenian Institutions upon the *Laws* of Plato," 1933, pp. 131-192. The author characterizes, in advance, his conclusion, in the telling sentence, "... if it be true that the *Laws* savor of earth, the earth is chiefly that of Plato's native Athens" (p. 131), and offers at the close an inclusive list (pp. 189-190) of some sixty parallels between the legal and political features of the two cities. Our earlier promise, p. 332, to show that Plato's legislation

warden, is open to all male citizens, and voters for this purpose likewise include all.³¹ It is curious to note that election, thus employed, was regarded by the Athenians as undemocratic, and must be counted among the "oligarchic" features of Plato's state.

(2) Helotry. — As we have shown,³² Plato is well aware of the dangers and injustice of the Spartan institution. He hopes to establish in his Magnesian colony a system free of its evils, in which, though he gives the slave less legal protection than did Athenian democracy, Plato hopes to bring it about by the strong pressure of moral unanimity that he shall be treated with scrupulous justice by a master who feels that his power has not lessened but increased his responsibility for his slave's welfare.³³

(3) Militarism. — We have discussed Plato's "irenic" ideal,³⁴ and have mentioned the passage (628 D-E) in which, tactfully, in the presence of the Spartan, he rebukes the Spartan tradition for its preoccupation with war: no man will ever make "a finished lawgiver unless he designs his war legislation for peace rather than his peace legislation for war." The aim of his state, as he tells us (962 E-963 A), is not victory over other states, or any of

in the *Laws* is heavily indebted to the Solonian code may be vicariously paid by a reference to pp. 190-191 of Chase's monograph, where ten specific parallels are listed. At one point we may dissent from Chase's interpretation, namely, the assertion, p. 134, that Plato has made the amount of a man's landed property the basis of the property classification of citizens. In view of the equal number of citizens and of land allotments, and the inalienability of the allotments, it would be impossible for any citizen to acquire more land than any other, within the state, nor is there any evidence of expected encroachment on neighboring states — rather the reverse (*Laws* 737 D). On the other hand, it is plain (744 B-C) that Plato expected wide variation among the citizens in amount of movable property. That it is this variation which is to be the basis of the property classification thus appears clear from the *Laws* itself, and is confirmed by Aristotle's testimony (for what it is worth), *Politics* II, vi, 1265 b 15.

³¹ Plato says (*Laws* 753 B) the voters shall be all men who serve or who have served according to their ability as horse-soldiers or as foot-soldiers, which would seem to include all except cowards or criminals. This fact makes clear the injustice of Popper's sneer (p. 489) that the Law-wardens are to be elected only by the "military class" in Plato's state, though Popper charges Plato elsewhere (p. 538) with mak-

ing the illiberal requirement that all citizens shall receive military training. In point of fact the election of Law-wardens comes as near as anything in Athenian political practice to satisfying modern standards of democratic government, its only departure from the Athenian democratic ideal being its failure to employ the lot. (It is to be noted that we here refer to the election of Law-wardens as provided for at 753 B-D, not to the arrangement described at 966 C-D and 968 D; this later arrangement we take to be a step toward that possible transformation of the city of the *Laws* into the ideal Republic which Plato permits himself to contemplate at the end of the final book; cf. n. 38, p. 517, below.) Similarly unjust is Popper's charge against Plato of militarism, based on the fact that both of his approved states are to be ruled by "wise ex-soldiers." This is as true for Athens as for Plato's city of the *Laws*.

There exists also in Plato's city the post of Examiner, which, though its duties are restricted, consisting only in ensuring that no official shall transgress the bounds of his office, might be held by virtue of this fact to outrank all other offices. This position also is open to all citizens, and all citizens participate in the election (*Laws* 915 E f.).

³² See pp. 178-181.

³³ See pp. 179, 181, 182.

³⁴ See p. 226, and n. 232.

the other commonly pursued aims, but simply "virtue," or, as he elsewhere (701 D) formulates it, independence, internal harmony, and indwelling wisdom. Now it is true that Plato is about to frame a city whose citizens will seemingly devote the greater part of their time to arduous gymnastics and military training. Does this deprive him of his right to criticize Sparta from above? From our modern standpoint, it might appear that it does, so doubtful have most of us grown of the compatibility of continuous active "preparedness" and a genuinely pacific national temper. But not so, if we do Plato the courtesy of distinguishing the probable and contradictory outcome of his intention from the intention itself.

Plato's plan for reconciling military preparedness with a way of life that owed its central allegiance to the ideal of peace might, with some extravagance, be called a prophetic anticipation, with a huge extension in the sphere of application, of Boy-Scoutism. As the Boy Scout, ideally, not only perfectly enjoys what he is about, but is receiving a most admirable moral education and at the same time is strengthening his body and acquiring the various skills that will prepare him to become, on demand, a highly efficient soldier in defense, so Plato conceived that his citizens, with their gymnastic contests and war games, their riding and hunting, and their participation in the athletic but equally aesthetic and morally improving festival dances and choral performances, would be simultaneously preparing for any war that need ever be, achieving their maximum happiness, and fulfilling the divine purpose for man.³⁵ One might search the literature of antiquity all a long summer's day without discovering a statement of a more pacific ideal.

(4) Education. — The range and depth of purpose marking Plato's plan of education in the *Laws* (described in our text above) ³⁶ is by its very nature an implicit condemnation of the Spartan scheme. True that Plato has not freed himself from all its unfortunate features, deeming them necessary for his communal purposes — for example, censorship — but wherever he has departed, as he so often has, from the Spartan model, he has moved in a direction approvable on modern principles. He could not copy Athens, which had no public system of childhood education.

Other features of the city of the *Laws* which are not Spartan in inspiration include the basically Athenian framework of government, comprising the following set of institutions: its popular Assembly; its Council, adapted, with the addition of the modified property-qualification above mentioned, from the Athenian Council; its elected military officials and its city- and market-stewards; and its council of Law-wardens, corresponding roughly to one

³⁵ For a full exposition of these interpenetrating purposes of Plato's prescriptions regarding athletics, military training, virtue, religion, and happiness, see R. C. Lodge, *Plato's Theory of Education*, 1947,

chapter IV, "Education for Citizenship," and for Plato's central thought developed in our paragraph, *Laws* 803 C-E.

³⁶ See pp. 130-131, 367.

aspect of the court of the Areopagus in its day of power.³⁷ Add to these the carefully articulated legal system based on the Athenian dicasteries, whose defects did not blind Plato to their many merits. Finally, there is the unique institution of the Nocturnal Council, composed of the ten eldest Law-wardens, the Examiners (all these being popularly elected officials), a few others who have served the state well, and an equal number of their chosen younger companions. This body, despite its alarming name—it should, indeed, have been called the Dawn Council—and its unhappy association in our minds with the death of atheists, is designed by its creator to serve a variety of benign and important purposes. It will be a species of philosophical institute, a practical adaptation of the Platonic Academy, its members presumed to possess philosophic insight and a degree of educated understanding scarcely inferior to that of the philosopher kings. It will be an agency of stabilization and social control, but it will serve also, within carefully restricted limits, as an organ of reform; for it will sit as a perpetual committee on the revision and improvement of the laws, and will supervise the official journeys to foreign parts to bring home news of discoveries which may be of use for the perfecting of the life of the community.³⁸

In the light of what we have shown to be Plato's joint incorporation of so much Athenian excellence and his rejection, partial but, as we have seen,

³⁷ No implication is intended that each of these institutions, taken separately, is specifically Athenian; thus the Spartans too possessed an Assembly. It would also have been possible to include in the list the "land-stewards," or "watch-captains" and the system of military training (760 B-763 C) which they conduct, an institution bearing roughly equal resemblance to the Spartan "secret service" and to the training of the Athenian Ephebi. Cf. Chase (*op cit*, n. 30, p. 514 above), pp. 151-154. The institutions and offices mentioned are described, in the order given, at *Laws* 764 A f.; 756 B f.; 755 B f., 759 A f.; 753 B f. The popular courts are described at *Laws* 767-768.

³⁸ The references documenting these statements on the Night Council are 769 A ff., esp. 769 D; 951 C-952 C; 960 B-968 B. A word is here in order regarding the change in the status and function of this institution, introduced at the end of the *Laws*, 969 B ff., and engendering in the entire fabric of Plato's second-best city a contradiction which no quantity of explanation can entirely remove. The sovereign power to form and reform the state in the light of its definitive wisdom which is conferred, thus late in the day, upon this organ

of government, would render idle the whole complex structure of legal and political institutions that Plato has been at such pains to build and for which he had planned so extensive a future. Perhaps the least unsatisfactory disposition of the difficulty is psychological: Plato has never at any time really abandoned his ideal of the philosophic state; he has merely postponed its realization *sine die*. Coming, at long last, to the concluding section of his extended description of the second-best, with the end of his own mortal career not far from view, he saw and took the opportunity for one last profession of his faith in the attainability of the true human goal. And what better device could the imagination of the ageing dramatist conceive than this most characteristic curtain to his last act of his final play? Our assumption, therefore, is that prior to this final rebirth as a committee for the realization of the Republic, the Night Council was designed to be an important but not omnipotent part of the city, and our remarks in the text refer exclusively to the Council as engaged in activities which leave undisturbed the basic structure of the state.

far-reaching, of so much that is most repellent in the Spartan scheme, the charge of Spartanism reveals itself in the full mendacity of its "half-truthfulness." It was Xenophon, with the fairy-tale coloration of his *Constitution of the Lacædaemonians*, and bless his innocence, Plutarch with his moralizing *Life of Lysurgus*, and not Plato, who gave the myth of Sparta its pair of wings.

"Holism" and collectivism. — In an earlier chapter we touched upon some aspects of a theme which we must now submit to a more extended analysis: Popper's critique of Plato's so-called "holism,"³⁹ a term which Popper has applied in at least three distinguishable aspects of meaning, whose range and mutual consistency it will be our first task to explore. We shall consider first that part of Popper's interpretation which seeks to bring Plato into complete agreement with a central tenet of totalitarianism as conceived not only by Popper but by all three of our nonpartisan authorities.⁴⁰ This is Popper's imputation to Plato of the doctrine that "it is the end of the individual to maintain the stability of the state"⁴¹ and its counterpart, "the criterion of morality is the interest of the state. . . . 'Good is what is in the interest of my group; or my tribe; or my state.'" And from this Platonic-totalitarian theory of morality, we are told, "it is easy to see" that there follows the consequence, destined to be explicitly drawn by Hegel in later centuries, "that the state can never be wrong in any of its actions, as long as it is strong."⁴²

To Plato's "holism" thus conceived, Popper has added the advocacy of the famous "organic" theory of the state, as a "permanent collective," a "natural" unit of a higher order," "within which the different individuals and groups . . . , with their natural inequalities, must render their specific and very unequal services." Combining, now, this doctrine of functional variety among citizens with the exaltation of the state's interest immeasurably above the individual's, Popper ascribes to Plato the belief that "the individual is nothing but a cog," his virtue wholly comprised in his fitness for his social task.⁴³

Thus far "holism" has had reference to the whole which is the "tribe" or "state." But Popper has found in Plato another and a wider application that enables him to describe Plato's holism as his "demand that the individual

³⁹ In Popper's lexicon, the term "holism" is graced with no suggestion of emergent novelty and creative advance, ideas which its use in the cosmological system of the late General Smuts has taught many readers to associate inseparably with the term. Nor does Smuts' holism in any sense exemplify what for Popper is the essential viciousness of holism as he employs the term, that is, the brutal indifference of the "whole" to

the rights and values of its parts, its tyrannical disposition to exploit.

⁴⁰ Brinton, as will be recollected, included among the characteristics of totalitarianism "nationalism," of a brand which "exalted one national group into masters, all others into slaves" (*op. cit.*, p. 420). Perry lists "tribalism," and McGovern, "etatism."

⁴¹ Popper, p. 97.

⁴² Popper, p. 106.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 107.

should subserve the interest of the whole, whether this be the *universe*" (italics ours), "the city, . . . or any other collective body."⁴⁴ With disapproval he quotes, as "a truly classical formulation of moral holism," a sentence from Plato's sermon addressed in the *Laws* (903 C) to the young disbeliever who is unaware of the moral unity of the World-All: "all partial generation is for the sake of the Whole, . . . it not being generated for thy sake, but thou for its sake."⁴⁵

In the inconsistency of the meaning which Popper has thus assigned to Plato's "holism" lies the first and most fatal weakness of Popper's position. For how can a "moral holist," whose "whole" is the universe, be simultaneously a political holist, for whom "the criterion of morality is the interest of the state"? The contradiction is palpable, but from it there is one escape open to whoever is willing to commit the supreme anachronism of endowing Plato with modern, quasi-Hegelian categories. On this audacious assumption it could be argued that the universe is so controlled by the High God, whose delight is continual contradiction, that each state as a political "whole" is rightly the master of its own "parts," and at the same time is rightly the opponent of all other "wholes," the moral oneness of the universe manifesting itself in God's unfailing approval of each successively victorious whole. This is a path few would venture upon; nevertheless some such attribution to Plato of ideas of which he was, so to say, systematically unaware, alone can provide escape from contradiction for anyone who, with Popper, would press upon Plato the charge of holism both political and cosmic.

It is our privilege, therefore, by an odd turn of the argument, to accept (with the reservation presently to be noticed)⁴⁶ Popper's charge that Plato

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 80. We give the *Laws* passage as translated by Bury, Loeb Library. Certain alterations that Popper has introduced into his second edition constitute recognition of an earlier error in fact, but substitute for this error the inconsistency noted in the text above, between Plato's alleged doctrine that state-interest is the criterion of right, and the "moral holism" now added to the charge. In the first edition, p. 69, Popper cited as "a truly classical formulation of political holism" the *admonition* to the young atheist; in the second edition, p. 80, the word "moral" has replaced "political." Similarly, on p. 87, where originally the only wholes mentioned as those to which the "holist" will sacrifice the individual, are city, tribe, and race, there has now, on p. 99, been added the universe as well. In a rewritten footnote, p. 517, while acknowledging the cosmic reference of the admoni-

tion to the atheist, he has contented himself with reiterating his conviction that, even so, the "underlying tendency" of Plato's holism is political. (Asi's lexicon and I have been quite unable to verify Popper's assertion, made in this connection, that "Plato often uses 'holon' (esp. the plural of it) to mean 'state' as well as 'world'") By thus recognizing the absence of a principal prop on which his argument had been sustained without making the entailed adjustment in his interpretation of Plato's thought (except for the attempt noted to broaden the charge), Popper exemplifies a tendency shown also in other changes made in the second edition (see pp. 603 and 629, and cf. n. 17, p. 21, and n. 121, p. 451) to correct factual errors without abandoning or altering in Plato's favor the conclusions to which they had originally served as premises.

⁴⁶ See pp. 528-529 below.

is a moral holist, and to employ this as a premise in demonstrating that Plato did not sponsor the theory that the state's interest is the ultimate criterion of right. Such a theory is clearly a form of ethical particularism, to be classified under the general heading of moral relativism. Can it be shown that Plato's ethical doctrine is rooted in a universalistic absolutism radically opposed to relativism in all its forms? We have earlier maintained precisely this position,⁴⁷ and the very passage that Popper has cited from the *Laws* as proof of Plato's moral holism will serve well to remind us of the cosmic universalism of Plato's ethics. For Plato, there was no world but one, the "only-begotten" of the *Timaeus* (31 B), and no set of moral principles but those everlastingly implicit in the nature of that world; and the young disbeliever is admonished, in language that mingles popular religious imagery and Plato's own theological doctrine, that one cosmic law determines the fate of every soul for good or ill, in accordance with its own free moral choices. Divine providence is at work (903 B-C) looking to "the preservation and excellence of the whole," and every soul "tends therefore always in its striving toward the All." That the life of man is bound to the divine order is specifically asserted again (*Laws* 645 A), in the striking image of the "golden cord" of reason or *logismos*, which is also law in the true sense of the word: "with that most excellent leading-string of the law we must needs coöperate always"; it is needful "for the individual man to grasp the true account of these inward pulling forces and to live in accordance therewith, and . . . for the State . . . to make this into a law for itself and be guided thereby in its intercourse both with itself and with all other States." We see, then, the subordination of both individual and state to a divinely sanctioned norm. The whole scheme of morals and theology is embraced in the pregnant aphorism, a bold rephrasing of the dictum of Protagoras, "God is the measure of all things" (*Laws* 716 C) — the measure, that is to say, of the excellence of man. The very purpose of the state, as we have seen, is the production of the best possible human beings,⁴⁸ and since this is so, Plato goes so far as to declare

⁴⁷ This position, implicit in our ch. 6, pp. 201-232, is stated in terms on pp. 250f.

⁴⁸ *Laws* 770 C-D. Passages can be quoted from the *Laws* (as Rogers has done; cf. p. 642 below) to prove that Plato's aim was not so much to develop individual human excellence as to promote good citizenship. Thus Plato declares that true education is "training from childhood in goodness, which makes a man eagerly desirous of becoming a perfect citizen, understanding how both to rule and be ruled righteously," and again that it is "the process of drawing and guiding children toward that principle which is pronounced right by the law and confirmed as truly right by the ex-

perience of the oldest and the most just" (*Laws* 643 E and 659 D, trans. Bury, Loeb Library). But, in view of the passage we have cited in our text, it is clear that the primary aim remains moral and not political, in so far as for Plato these terms admit of separation. As Rogers himself does not deny, Plato, in stressing the "sociological," does not in his own terms remit any of the conditions demanded for the goodness of the individual soul; the qualities he would exact from the good citizen are simply those, so far as they can be attained, which define the good man, and the principles "pronounced right by the law" are, in Plato's state, to be coextensive with morality. It is

(770 D-E), it is the duty of every citizen of a state which does not adhere to this aim to "allow it to be revolutionized . . . rather than to change to a polity which naturally makes men worse."⁴⁹ Popper has told us that from Plato's equation, "good = the state's interest," there follows the obvious consequence that the state can do no wrong either against its own citizens or against other states, so long as it remains strong. Does not Plato's denial of this consequence do all that was logically necessary to prove that the alleged equation was none of his?

If this be considered still insufficient proof that the province of morality is not for Plato coterminous with the area of the state, we may turn to the *Republic*, which may be said to tell the same story in accents more philosophical and less devout, though the description of the last stages of the dialectic ascent into the transcendental sunlight of the Idea of the Good glows with a genuinely religious feeling; and in the Myth of Er, at its conclusion, we have, again, moral truths cloaked in sacred mythology. There is the same recognition that good is not a mere commodity of mortal contrivance and manufacture, but a discovery and an acknowledgment. The philosopher is he who is most pious in his admission of the authority of this cosmic morality, and most adept in its discovery and application. It follows that Plato's chief political commandment, the bringing of the philosopher into governmental command, issues in a result directly contrary to what political holism as Popper has defined it can endure. The vesting of authority in philosophic reason presents itself as the true "holism," to which all lesser wholes must bow on pain of irrationality and contradiction. The true philosopher of Plato's moral imagining is he who delivers this mandate to the community, and the well-conditioned community is that which consents most completely to its benevolent demands.⁵⁰

again a case of "consilience" (cf. pp. 64, 413, 439-440, 528-529, 555-556).

Similar considerations seem sufficient to meet the argument of Dodds (*The Greeks and the Irrational*, 1951, p. 224). Dodds sees in the religious prescriptions of the *Laws* nothing of religion *per se*, merely statecraft and an engine of social control. *Laws* 885 D and 888 B, which Dodds cites, show Plato's belief that such tenets as he imposes are necessary to ensure that men shall "do justice" and "live nobly." That such behavior would be socially useful is clear; but is it not equally clear that, to Plato, these are also prime goods for the individual citizen? And Dodds himself has stoutly maintained (e.g., pp. 234-235) that Plato stands fully committed to the essential truth of the religion he would impart. Dodds' suggested alternative, either an agent of social control,

or (like the Inquisition) a dedicated effort to save souls, is not for Plato a genuine one. It presents, rather, the two indiscernible parts of the same whole.

"The translations are from Bury, Loeb Library.

"The "documentation" of the position maintained in the two paragraphs of the text above seems superfluous for anyone who has read the *Republic*, especially Books VI-VII, in which the metaphysical basis of Plato's ethical and social system is revealed. Even those who regard Plato as in an important sense a totalitarian can still distinguish clearly between the sort of totalitarian to whom the ultimate ground of authority is power unrestricted by morality, and Plato's manifest appeal to transcendental sanctions; see, for Crossman's recognition of this fact, our n. 26, p. 250, and for like testimony by

We shall consider, then, that we have warrant to assert that Plato is not a "political holist," a "nationalist," a "tribalist," or an "etatist," so far as this means a worshipper of the state. We have still to weigh the justice of the complaint that Plato supported the organic theory of the state and ruthlessly sacrificed to the collective the individualities and happiness of its citizens

Elliott and McDonald, *Western Political Heritage*, 1949, pp 12 and 97, as compared with their description of Hobbes on pp 442 and 446. The distinction is, indeed, so palpable that one feels it necessary to ask how Popper can have managed to avoid a collision with it. The answer has been delivered to us at some length by Popper himself: he first convinces himself (pp 143-144) that the idea of the good is mere "empty formalism" of no ethical or political utility, then by a flat misquotation of *Republic* 608 E (he translates, pp 37 and 143 "'good is everything that preserves,' and 'evil everything that destroys or corrupts,'" whereas the Greek says "good" is "that which preserves and benefits," etc.), he further degrades it into a mere fixative or agent of arrestment. He then reminds us of the reason he has assigned—the fear of independent thought—for Plato's delaying till the age of thirty the beginning of ethical criticism and until that of fifty the final induction of the philosopher kings to be in to the highest reaches of philosophy (cf App XII, p 618f). From all these considerations he infers (p 145) that Plato could not really have required a resident philosopher in his city merely for the purpose of knowing so barren an emptiness as the Idea of the Good and must have had some ulterior and wholly political purpose, and without more ado he assigns two such discreditable aims (cf pp 438 and 450 above), both local to the ideal city. We observe here Popper's readiness to suppose that because he (and Grote, whom he quotes pp 588-589, as being of the same opinion) can see no content in the Good of Plato, therefore Plato cannot himself have attached to it any importance, and his parallel certainty that because he himself sees the unwisdom of deferring philosophical inquiry till full maturity, therefore Plato himself must have been equally aware of it. Underlying both of these is Popper's easy assumption of Plato's duplicity, the quick conclusion that we can brush aside what Plato says and ferret out hidden motives—

discreditable, of course, else why should he have hidden them? In view of our pains taking consideration, in an earlier chapter, of all the props upon which Popper has rested his accusation of dishonesty, we feel justified in ruling out of court any of Popper's arguments which, like those just reported, require it as a premise.

This same postulate of Plato's disingenuousness with his reader has led Popper similarly (cf our p 358) to discount the sincerity of Plato's religious beliefs as expressed in the *Laws*. We are told that Plato was "perhaps himself an atheist," but that in any case he certainly subordinated completely to political convenience whatever religion he may have felt (Popper's original misinterpretation, as purely political tendency, of the passage regarding the moral unity of the World All, was probably a result of this suspicion, see our note 45, p 519). It may be suggested that Popper has been assisted to his unfortunate conclusion by a failure to distinguish between Plato's outlook upon popular religious beliefs and Plato's own personal, philosophic religion. Plato deemed it necessary that popular religion should be purged of what he felt to be its crudities and impieties, thus purified, he was willing to accept it as a set of more or less adequate symbols for the expression of the deeper penetrations into the divine nature, to which alone the methods of philosophy can conduct. It is only by a radical confusion of categories that one can inquire into the honesty or dishonesty of Plato's acceptance of mythological symbols (for a discussion of Plato's attitude on such points, see n 71, p 429, pp 433-435). To set right this error, we may point first to Popper's own admission, in his second edition, that Plato seriously believed in the transcendent moral whole which is the universe, and expresses this belief in the *Laws*; we may adduce the religious grandeur of the *Timaeus*, certainly not to be explained as "political opportunism", and we may again object that there is no evidence that Plato is bent on deceiving his reader.

The greatest hindrance to a fair determination of our issue is terminological, as we shall perforce be employing terms not only difficult to define, but refractory and, so to say, determined to do our thinking for us by settling all questions in advance: "organicism," "collectivism," "anti-individualism," these resist being employed in anything less than the totality of their meaning. To attempt it is like trying to call a man one-third of a murderer. But let us, with the encouragement of Humpty-Dumpty's precedent, see which of us is master — words or we.

From the various texts which Popper has called to his support⁵¹ we shall select as fairly representative three, one chosen from the *Republic* and two from the *Laws*. In the first, the happiness of the guardian class of the ideally "happy" city is being called in question by the respondent, Adeimantus, who feels that "Socrates" is imposing upon them unduly heavy burdens and restraints. To this challenge, gladly accepted, comes the reply,

while it would not surprise us if these men thus living prove to be the most happy, yet the object on which we fixed our eyes in the establishment of the state was not the exceptional happiness of any one class but the greatest possible happiness of the city as a whole . . . these helpers and guardians are to be constrained and persuaded to do what will make them the best craftsmen in their own work, and similarly all the rest. And so, as the entire city develops and is ordered well, each class is to be left to the share of happiness that its nature comports.⁵²

In the first passage from the *Laws*, the discussion turns not on happiness but on what is deemed the basic condition of happiness: the submission of the community as a whole to the rule of law. The division of the state into parties with rival interests, each with "a watchful eye on the other," is deplored, and it is said that "such politics we, of course, deny to be politics, just as we deny that laws are true laws unless they are enacted in the interest of the common weal of the whole State. But where the laws are enacted in the interest of a section," such "justice" is "an empty name." And again:

That State and polity come first . . . where . . . throughout the whole State . . . there is community of wives, children, and all chattels, and all that is called "private" . . . is rooted out of our life . . . and even things naturally private have become in a way "communized," — eyes, for instance . . . seem to see . . . in common, — and all men are, so far as possible, unanimous in the praise and blame they bestow, rejoicing and grieving at the same things.⁵³

"The city as a whole," "the whole State," "all that is called 'private'" — in these words the major issue is brought before us, to be determined largely by the meanings we assign them. For Popper the "whole" in question is an abstract omnivorous holistic whole, that feeds upon the concrete private values of its unhappy parts; alternatively, Popper has expressed this same criticism

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⁵² *Republic* 420 B, 421 B-C, trans. Shorey, Loeb Library.

⁵³ *Laws* 715 A-B, and 732 B-D, trans. Bury, Loeb Library.

by imputing to Plato the vicious aestheticism of employing the private lives of his citizens as so much insensate paint or clay in the hands of the political artist, who forces it into the rigid pattern of his archaic ideal.⁵⁴ We may pass rapidly over the impressionist reasons which apparently lie behind this interpretation, among them, presumably, the supposed exploitation and harsh repression of the "human cattle," the denial to the philosopher kings themselves of any real intellectual freedom, and the addiction of Plato to the vacuous authoritarianism of the Theory of Ideas, matters with which we have dealt elsewhere. We shall turn, instead, to a more direct consideration of Plato's meaning when he speaks thus of the individual and his relation to the whole.

Was Plato an anti-individualist? We should have learned by now that it is of little use to try to extract Plato's answer to the great problems by asking him questions to be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." Plato's outlook on the individual must be broken down into several aspects, of which the first and least disputable is his condemnation of individualist selfishness, the "private" in the sense of "mine-and-you-can't-have-it." We may feel that in setting up as his ideal for this reason, as we have seen him do, the common ownership of all property, even of wives and children, he was carrying matters to an unreasonable extreme; it is true that he himself did not attempt the complete realization of this ideal, even in the perfect city. But we may certainly sympathize with his wish to escape as far as possible the conflict of selfish interests which had been the plague of Greece, and particularly of his native city.

Plato's second disparagement of the individual—to us his chief failure here—arises from his acknowledged principle that there is but one truth, one standard of right, and his consequent failure to approve the value of the individual point of view; put in another way, this means that he did not in theory acknowledge the preciousness of individual variations, save for those variations which carry the exceptional individual closer to the ideal. Still less could he be expected to appreciate—or even tolerate—that luxuriance of individual caprice, unguided by any unifying principle, of which he has presented a lively satirical image in his portrait of the "democratic man" (*Rep.* VIII, 561 A ff.). We shall have a further word to say on this topic shortly.

Thirdly, he disapproved individualism (as is well known and truly charged against him), in the sense that he believed the average individual incapable of self-direction and in need of guidance and protection against error. Indeed, this flaw in Plato's social theory will be found to be at the heart of almost every charge we are considering in this chapter, and lends to each of these in turn whatever air of truthfulness it may possess. What has been denounced as an associated defect in Plato's treatment of the ordinary citizens

⁵⁴ Popper, pp 161-163; cf. our pp 138-439.

is his assignment to them of those "banausic" tasks which he conceived to be harmful to the body and dangerous to the soul. But as we have shown above, Plato's convictions about the high responsibilities of government on the one hand and the harmful effects of labor on the other, placed him in a dilemma from which there was no escape which could completely meet his own requirements, still less one which could have satisfied his modern critics.⁵⁵

There are, however, other components of individualism toward which Plato is far more favorably disposed. He wished his guardians to achieve the fullest development possible to man. As individuals they were to possess not only the ability to direct others wisely but also the crowning grace of full rational self-command. Further, in the *Laws* (768 A-B) there is unmistakable recognition of a value very near the heart of individualism, when Plato affirms that all citizens shall share in prosecution of offenses against the state and shall serve their turn as judges in the popular court, giving the very individualist reason that otherwise they will have no feeling that the state is their state. Add to this that, by implication in the *Republic*, but with full explicitness in the *Laws* (720-724), Plato proposes that all citizens shall be regarded as persons having a right to be given the reasons for what is required of them

⁵⁵ Plato's disposition of the problem in the *Republic* is discussed on pp. 240-242; in the *Laws*, on pp. 259-261.

Plato's belief in the difficulty and precariousness of human virtue, and his consequent proposal to guard all his citizens during their formative years and all but the chosen few throughout life from enticements and distractions of the most varied kinds, have also been seen as a grave fault, indicative of a jaundiced view of human nature (Fite; cf. our p. 79), or of a totalitarian overestimate of the province of the state (Popper; cf. our n. 130, p. 557). But Plato's attitude here has another and a more engaging face. For example, in the *Theaetetus* (173 A-B), to the disparaging sketch of the addict of the law courts, with his shrewd but petty and benighted soul, Plato is careful to add that the character of such a man is a natural consequence of the environmental pressures that molded the tender young soul, warping it from its proper form. Similarly in the *Republic*, we heard (p. 79) Plato's Adeimantus declare that not innate depravity but false teaching is responsible for the worldly estimate of justice held by most men. Again, in the *Timaeus* (86 B-87 B) Plato repeats his exonerating of those whom bad education has

deprived of virtue, adding the further excuse that many wrong-doers are victims of bad physical constitutions and maladies.

In passages such as these we may measure the distance separating the idealist-reformer Plato from that cynical class-bound realist, the Old Oligarch, and we may recognize Plato's kinship to the modern liberal who seeks to abolish crime not by destroying criminals but by removing the conditions which produce them and to interpose between the younger generation and the possibility of wrong-doing a more salutary moral and physical environment. And though we should wish to draw the line between wholesome and dangerous occupations at a different point, it is still true, as the morning paper continues daily to remind us, that the performance of many socially important functions is morally too hazardous for many of our fellow citizens. We may smile at what seems to us Plato's rather naïve protectionism, but we cannot in our thoughtful moments dismiss as a mere whimsy his demand that the frailty of human virtue be reinforced by all the institutional agencies at our command, both for the sake of the individual offenders and for the welfare of the community against which they offend.

and to be patiently convinced by persuasion. The unfortunate deceptions, of which we hear so much from Plato's critics, are expedients seldom resorted to and do not touch the moral teaching which is to be imparted, teaching simplified and even sometimes couched in mythological terms, but based on standards which are those of Plato himself.

And there is another sense in which the individual, as end and not as means, is acknowledged by Plato, who has remembered that every man, or as we should say, the common man, has creaturely needs that must be met before concern with higher values becomes possible. Plato's state will guarantee to every one of its members, as Bertrand Russell has rather acidulously admitted, "enough to eat"⁵⁶ and security of life and limb. There will be freedom from exploitation and abuse — Plato is desperately in earnest in his determination to prevent the common citizens from having any just cause for feeling themselves exploited or mistreated. If anyone in the Republic is to be discriminated against economically, it is his intention that it shall be the guardian class, for whom, however, other satisfactions are provided. To talk of the nonguardian citizens as "cattle" where there is no "milking," as "sheep" where none is to be "shorn," implies a type of discrimination of which there is to be no trace. The city of the *Laws*, less perfect in its plan, will indeed "shear" its slaves; so did Athens; for we must remember that, though near Utopia, Plato's second-best city was still within the confines of the ancient slave-holding world. But the citizens of the *Laws* are not intended to batten on one another, or violate one another's rights with impunity.

But Plato is concerned with individual interests on another and higher level. He would have been guilty of the betrayal of his old master had he dropped from his heart and mind the concern for the spiritual welfare of all men within the radius of his influence. The virtue which he will enable each of his citizens to achieve, as the very health of his soul, is not, it is true, identical for everyone. The weaker soul may achieve only a vicarious participation in "the divine governing principle" which "the best man . . . has within himself" (*Republic* 590 C); for the average man, knowledge firm and unshakable will be replaced by true opinion which, taking over the direction of emotion and appetite, will provide his inner polity with that due order which is Platonic justice. In him it will be unable to sustain itself unaltered without the external support of good government or wise laws. But given such support, "we all," says Plato, "so far as possible may be akin and friendly, because our governance and guidance are the same."⁵⁷

We may here notice a certain noble inconsistency which Plato introduces into his later ethical doctrine. In the *Republic*, as we have seen, it is neces-

⁵⁶ Russell, on the page (115) of his *History* cited in n 24, p 510.

⁵⁷ *Republic* 590 D, trans. Shorey, Loeb

Library, slightly altered Cf. our n 202, p 217.

sary that each man, to be accounted just, must have true knowledge or right opinion of the good; in the *Laws*, Plato goes so far as to allow a man to have that coveted appellation by merely holding fast to "the opinion of the best," though he be at the same time sadly mistaken in his beliefs, and even guilty, because of them, of "great and brutal wrongs" (*Laws* 864 A, 863 C). This passage, with its "deontological" approval of the good man tragically mistaken, registers Plato's highest flight into the stratosphere of moral individualism.

But even leaving this more radical individualism out of account as an insight with which the rest of Plato's thought was never fully aligned, we can credit to Plato a significant degree of individualism as a constant feature of his ethics. The virtues of his citizens are not identical with the mere fitness of each man to perform his civic task. They are also the inalienable personal property of their individual possessors. They would retain their full validity as a true standard of performance in any other society or in solitude, and they constitute the only wealth which a man carries with him out of this world.⁵⁸ Virtue, and its enjoyment, happiness, are the two foci of Plato's concern for his fellow men. With the partial exception of the most technical of his writings, it is true to say that every Platonic dialogue is a monument erected to his belief that individual men have a right to be considered important, and that their happiness and its enabling condition, justice done to them and by them, are the primary interests of a philosopher.

Once we recognize Plato's altruistic concern for the welfare of the individual, compromised for us though it is by its failure to include under welfare the right and duty of self-direction, we are the better prepared to follow Plato's thinking on the theme of political wholes and their relation to their members, and to measure the appropriateness of calling him a "collectivist." It is not conceivable that any serious and liberal critic could so far forget the assumptions upon which liberalism itself, along with other political faiths, is built, as to rebuke Plato for appealing to the idea of a whole, or human group, to which allegiance is due and in whose interest sacrifice is proper to be made. Dissent can begin only when the claim of the whole is believed to take serious and unnecessary toll of primary human values. Such is the case, we may agree, when the whole distorts and diminishes the individuals that compose it. And for this fault Plato's whole of the state, as we have seen, must be held in some degree accountable, though without his wish that it should be so; since what to him is full development of all the excellence that each individual is capable of attaining, is for us too often imperfection and curtailment. In the absence of freedom, at best a subservient and cloistered

⁵⁸ The important implications of this tenet for Plato's relation to individualism are suggested below, n 63.

virtue can be looked for, and this, for the majority of Plato's citizens, though not for all, would be the summit of attainment.

A political whole or state is pernicious, likewise, when it is conceived as a sort of super-entity, hovering above the heads of its concrete citizens, gathering into itself all value, and depriving them individually of any title to consideration as against its sovereign claim. Of the existence of such a monster in Plato's thought we hear nothing.⁵⁸ Plato's ideal city consists simply of its citizens in action according to the plan of its constitution. There is, of course, the eternal "idea" of the city, its pattern in heaven. But to appeal to this in support of "statism" proves much too much; for in this transcendent sense, so is there also a "heavenly model" of the man and citizen. It is true, as Popper has noted,⁵⁹ that on Plato's view the dissolution of the state can come only from the imperfections and failings of its members; it is no less true — as he has failed to point out — that its perfection too is the product of the qualities of its citizens: the state is wise and brave through the wisdom and courage of the superior few, harmonious and just through the participation in virtue of all its citizens.⁶⁰ Nor has the excellence of the city of the *Laws* any other source. The religion of the superorganic state cannot be found in Plato's writings, and no quantity of Platonic references to the interest of the whole or the good of the state proves more than that Plato is mindful of the common interest and the shared good of its citizens.⁶¹

This position may be reinforced by some passages in which the citizens appear as beneficiaries of the operation of the principle of the whole. A review of the texts earlier quoted⁶² will show that they are pervaded with a common principle, whether the "whole" in question is "moral" or political. The supposition is that wherever a right standard is established, as it necessarily is, under divine rule, in the Cosmos, and as it may and should be in a human community, a reciprocity of interest exists between the larger and the smaller terms of the relation. It is never a case of the tracks leading in and only in to the lion's den. Our familiar young atheist is told, "What is best in thy case for the All turns out best for thyself also, in accordance with the power of your common origin."⁶³ And the guardians, whose expansive free-

⁵⁸ There is, in fact, however, some hint of a superstate in Pericles' oration. See pp. 287-288 above.

⁵⁹ Popper, p. 81.

⁶⁰ *Rep.* 428 E, 429 B, 431 E, 433 C; see also *Rep.* 435 E.

⁶¹ Our text parallels, at a respectful distance, the admirable evaluation of the political theory of the *Republic*, contained in Chapters III and IV of H. W. B. Joseph's *Essays in Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1935, a book which deserves a place in any reader's medi-

cine chest as an antidote against anti-Platonic poisoning.

⁶² See pp. 520 and 523 above.

⁶³ *Laws* 903 D, trans. Bury, Loeb Library. Cf. *Laws* 875 A, trans. Bury: "it benefits both public and private interests alike when the public interest, rather than the private, is well enacted."

Comparison of the view stated in the text with that of Solmsen, *Plato's Theology*, 1942, pp. 153-159, will reveal substantial agreement in spite of apparent divergence. The ideal of individual self-effacement for

dom and satisfactions, as these are commonly conceived, must be forgone in the execution of their duty, receive full compensation for their sacrifice: theirs is to be "a happier life than . . . that of the victors at Olympia."⁶⁴ In short, there is no Moloch here.

And finally, wholes are plainly bad when they serve as the vehicle of what Popper has called "group selfishness," a partnership of individuals willing to abandon their private interest to their group, as the price of its ability to dominate and exploit for their benefit other groups and individuals.⁶⁵ But Plato, as we have seen, has used no part of his energy in advocacy of such a whole.

When once we have overcome these false suspicions, then, like visitors to a temple in some strange land, who no longer believe it to be the shrine of a man-eating god, we should be able to look about us in Plato's city and find there something to admire. The city into which we have stepped is a whole that not only lacks the sinister quality Popper has imputed to it, but possesses positive merits in its own right. Plato does not in so many words make it a part of virtue that the good man shall feel a sense of nearness and community of interest with others, but he tacitly operates throughout with this assumption, which was presupposed also by Socrates.⁶⁶ For Plato, this unity will be most deeply felt between kinsmen, but will extend, with diminishing intensity, to fellow citizens, fellow Greeks, and beyond them, though here little more than the debt of justice is acknowledged, to mankind at large.⁶⁷ As applied to the organization of a single community, this principle is expressed in the sentence already quoted⁶⁸ from the *Laws*, which speaks of the common griefs and joys uniting the citizens of a truly ideal community. In the *Republic*, this same idea appears in the celebration of that community of feeling which exists when, "so far as may be, all the citizens rejoice and grieve alike . . . when

the good of the whole Solmsen believes the Greeks generally had derived from their political experience; in Plato also he finds the concept of a "Whole" whose interests are paramount and for whose sake its parts exist, a "Whole" exemplified alike in Plato's divinely ordered universe and in his ideal state. One might well infer that in Solmsen's eyes Plato is prepared to sacrifice the individual either to state or to Cosmos. On the contrary, Solmsen counts it for righteousness and for originality as well that to Plato "nothing is more essential and nothing more precious than individual souls"; unlike his predecessors Solon, Aeschylus, and Sophocles, Plato was not content to believe that the gods punish the innocent for the sins of their fathers or their fellow-citizens, but teaches that for each separate

any one of the citizens suffers aught of good or evil." And here again Plato uses the simile which, to Popper, reveals Plato's vicious organicism, in which the state is likened to a man whose bodily organism, when one of its members is wounded, "feels the pain as a whole."⁶⁹ In the ideal city, we remember, all citizens are to be taught by the myth of the metals to regard themselves as brothers, and rulers and common citizens call each other respectively "Nurturers" and "Helpers," while within the band of guardians the names and feelings appropriate to a single family bring with them peace and concord. In the polity of the *Laws*, though the close tie of kinship is abandoned, its place is taken by the "friendship" or "dearness to itself"⁷⁰ which is among the supreme blessings of the city. It is plain that when Plato speaks of an organism, what is in his mind is not voracity, but mutuality of support and sympathy which the group enables each of its members to enjoy both as donor and as recipient.

On balance, then, while it would be a partisan misuse of language to term Plato an "individualist," that fact need not hide from us Plato's feeling for the individual as the ultimate reality here below, for the sake of whom the social framework is constructed, whose quality imparts character to the community, and whose destiny outdures that of the state which is his transitory and terrestrial home.⁷¹ Nor will we go to war over any word, even those of

⁶⁹ *Republic* 462 C-D, trans. Shorey, Loeb Library.

⁷⁰ *Laws* 693 B-C. Other passages in which this concept is involved are *Rep.* 590 D, quoted on p. 526, where it is said that all inhabitants of the city will be "friendly" or "dear" to one another, being subject to the same just rule, and *Rep.* 621 C, where Socrates declares that, living righteously and wisely, we shall be "dear to ourselves" — harmonious within, like a happy city — and dear to the gods.

⁷¹ We may in this place give some account of Popper's category of "altruistic individualism," from which he sharply distinguishes what he takes to be Plato's position. Popper (pp. 99-103) sees Plato's attitude toward the individual as altogether "anti-humanitarian and anti-Christian," and holds that Plato, by consciously attempting to represent individualism as simply selfishness, has misled guileless readers in all ages, including such Platonic critics as England and Barker, who do homage to Plato's deceptive advocacy of collectivism; thus Plato has brought confusion into speculation on ethical matters which it has been reserved for Popper to set right.

On his way to this end Popper has told

us that a man may qualify as an "altruistic individualist" if he is "ready to make sacrifices in order to help individuals," and Popper has found this attitude exemplified in Dickens, who hated selfishness and felt "passionate interest in individuals with all their human weaknesses." It is found also in Pericles' recommendation of tolerance for the vagaries of fellow citizens, combined with willingness to protect them from injustice; in the Christian doctrine, "love your neighbor"; and in the Kantian doctrine that individuals must be regarded as ends, not as means only. Among these criteria, we observe more than one which would entitle Plato to membership in the group they define. For though, as we have seen, Plato did not admit the value of the individual's determination of what, for him, shall be truth, and though he did not, like Dickens, delight in individual idiosyncrasies, or like Pericles, view them with tolerance, or attach a high value to the relief of suffering, he cared for souls, and felt concern for others' happiness and mutuality of feeling and for their right to justice here on earth. An instance or two: There is the obvious paternal concern of the Platonic Socrates for the spiritual advancement of

the fighting variety, and will accordingly consent to call Plato a "collectivist," but with the all-important proviso that what he was collecting and uniting in sympathy was nothing else than as perfect and inoffensive as possible a collection of individuals.

We have now to deal with a passage from the *Laws* expressive of Plato's disapproval of one aspect of individualism, a passage of which Popper has made great and illegitimate use. His journalistic misapplication of a selection from it on the dust cover and on the title-page of Part I of his book, will be dissected in our note, where also we print the passage in full.⁷² We shall here discuss his handling of it in his text.

his young companions, Glaucon and Adeimantus, the same attitude shown, with minor variations, in almost every dialogue from first to last (pp. 366-367), and the altruistic satisfaction taken by the "true rhetorician" in the *Phaedrus* in employing his art to procure for his pupil "the highest happiness possible to man" (cf. p. 364). In the *Laws*, despite his too strict legislation regarding slaves, there is still Plato's warning that a master is never free to forget his slaves' inalienable right to justice at his hands (777 D-E; cf. p. 179), and there is also the declaration that Zeus, the avenger of injustice, guards the stranger (729 E; cf. p. 230). We also claim the right, though Popper will not admit it, to cite Plato's altruism on behalf of his ideal citizens, who, though they figure collectively in the discussion, are yet conceived as individual recipients of the benefits he wishes to bestow. In short, Popper, having found some important aspects of altruistic individualism missing from Plato's set of values, has confused the entire issue by denying the existence of those that are really there, and has needlessly obscured, in his turn, the unity of Plato and Pericles in wishing to protect fellow citizens against injustice, the compatibility of the Kantian principle with Plato's reverence for an individual soul, and the existence of a real point of agreement between Christianity and Platonism in that love for his neighbor which, though different in kind, both teach.

"The Platonic passage is as follows (*Laws* 912 A-D, trans. Bury, Loeb Library): "Military organization is the subject of much consultation and of many appropriate laws. The main principle is this—that nobody, male or female, should ever be left without control, nor should anyone, wheth-

er at work or in play, grow habituated in mind to acting alone and on his own initiative, but he should live always, both in war and peace, with his eyes fixed constantly on his commander and following his lead; and he should be guided by him even in the smallest detail of his actions—for example, to stand at the word of command, and to march, and to exercise, to wash and to eat, to wake up at night for sentry-duty and despatch-carrying, and in moments of danger to wait for the commander's signal before either pursuing or retreating before an enemy; and, in a word, he must instruct his soul by habituation to avoid all thought or idea of doing anything at all apart from the rest of his company, so that the life of all shall be lived *en masse* and in common; for there is not, nor ever will be, any rule superior to this or better and more effective in ensuring safety and victory in war. This task of ruling, and being ruled by, others must be practised in peace from earliest childhood; but anarchy must be utterly removed from the lives of all mankind, and of the beasts also that are subject to man."

Popper, in citing this passage in his text, p. 102, duly emphasizes its reference to military matters, but protests simultaneously that Plato means the same "militarist principles" to be adhered to in peace as well as in war, and that they are to be applied to every area of peaceful existence rather than simply to the program of military training. He then quotes the passage with perverse mistranslations which tend to obscure its military reference (e.g., "get up," for "stand at the word of command," "move" for "march" (*poreuesthai*), "leader" for "commander" or "official" (*archon*), and with omission of most of the phrases and clauses which point directly to military duty (e.g.,

Plato, addressing himself to the topic of military service, states the high importance of discipline for securing victory in war, insisting that every citizen-soldier, man or woman, must keep his eyes fixed on his commander — Popper translates the word as “leader” — and follow his orders in all his actions. But Plato adds that this discipline must be extended beyond serious activities to include those of play, or games, and that “this task of ruling, and being ruled by, others must be practised in peace from earliest childhood; but anarchy must be utterly removed from the lives of all mankind, and of the beasts also that are subject to man.”⁷³ This passage Popper has made central to his accusation that for Plato in the field of politics, the individual was “the Evil One himself,” to be subordinated at all costs to the collective Jugger-naut, and has branded as an utterance characteristic of “totalitarian militarists and admirers of Sparta.”⁷⁴

Several corrections are urgently needed. As we have seen, Plato has no intention of directing the entire life of his state toward victory in war. What he hopes to achieve (*Laws* 829 A) is the far more difficult task of attaining complete virtue, which will in the most favorable case exempt his citizens both from civil strife and from war. And as means to this end he has designed what we have called, jocosely, the “Boy Scout program” of mingled religious observance, organized sport or “games,” and continuous military preparedness.⁷⁵ That in the Greek world of Plato’s day the need of defensive preparation for war was no idle fantasy is clear from the minimal reading of the historical record. It is as part of this program that discipline is to be observed in “games,”⁷⁶ and that “ruling and being ruled” is to be practiced from childhood on.

the references to sentry-duty and to pursuing or retreating). The translation of the sentence in which Plato forbids independent action “*en paidiais*,” “in play” or “in games,” as Plato’s prohibition of doing such a thing “even playfully,” may have been caused by Popper’s failure to note the probable reference to the military games and contests. The net result of all these changes is to make the passage appear much more applicable to the ordinary affairs of life in peace-time, and thus to exaggerate the regimentation which Plato intends.

This small unfairness is entirely eclipsed, however, by what Popper has done with the passage elsewhere. On the title-page of Part I of his book, and also on the dust jacket, he prints a carefully chosen selection from it, and beside it prints, as its very antithesis, a sentence drawn from Pericles’ Funeral Oration (Thucydides, II, 40): “Though only a few may originate a policy,

we are all able to judge it.” This is to print in parallel a political ideal and a proposed military regulation; yet Popper has not only failed to apprise the reader of this selection of its military reference, but employing the same mistranslations, has deleted absolutely all those parts of the passage which would reveal the fact. The unsuspecting reader is thus led to suppose that, if Plato had his way, no one throughout life should bathe, stand up, or even move, without an immediate directive to that effect from a group-leader on the Hitler model. Tactics such as these make it necessary to check in merciless detail every one of Popper’s citations from the Platonic text, and reveal how far from the path of objectivity and fairness Popper has been swept.

⁷³ Trans. Bury, Loeb Library.

⁷⁴ Popper, pp. 102–103.

⁷⁵ See p. 516.

⁷⁶ Cf. *Laws* 829 B–C.

is throwing its shadow upon the floor of our own society, as the hours of employment are reduced for millions of our citizens. Those who propose as a remedy for this situation the extension of adult education are moved by considerations not unlike Plato's own.

We have been considering an aspect of Plato's philosophy in which his zeal for the common good has led him to speak of individuals only in terms of an order by which their wayward impulses are to be controlled. As an offset to the impression thus produced we must take note of some passages, fewer and less emphatic, yet clearly expressive of their author's sincere intent, in which Plato has protested against the damage done to the interests of the individual by unrelieved regimentation, or has exhibited a concern lest the lawgiver with his eye fixed on the common interest should fail to notice the hardship that a general rule may work. Thus in the second book of the *Laws* the Athenian administers one of his most severe blows to Spartan pride when he charges the Spartans with conducting their community after the manner of a military camp and not like dwellers in cities: "you [Spartans] keep your young people massed together like a herd of colts at grass," and no Spartan takes his own colt away from the herd and "trains him . . . by all the means proper to child-nursing, so that he may turn out not only a good soldier, but able also to manage a state and cities."⁷⁸

And in a discussion of the Greek counterpart of the levirate marriage, he offers us a particularly winsome piece of what may almost be called "anarchism" in the interests of marital compatibility. For we are told that cases may arise in which, due to some physical or mental malady or defect, the parties are unwilling to marry, and "prefer any other alternative, however painful." In such cases there is to be no summary coercion. Plato will compose a "prelude" begging the citizens thus enjoined to forgive the lawgiver his failure to provide for their varying circumstances as individuals, and begging the lawgiver to pardon "the subjects of the law inasmuch as they are naturally unable at times to carry out ordinances of the lawgiver laid down by him in ignorance,"⁷⁹ and will submit the case for arbitration before a succession of the highest authorities in the state.

When one considers that these two passages are taken from the work in which, if one follows Popper, Plato's abandonment of the individual is complete, we are once more powerfully reminded of the complexity and inclusiveness of Plato's outlook and the futility of attempting to see in him the simple advocate of a particular political program.

In concluding our discussion of the individual and the whole, we may note a point of contact and a point of difference between Plato and the totalitarians. Plato's celebration of solidarity within the civic group offers an obvi-

⁷⁸ 666 D-E, trans. Bury, Loeb Library.

⁷⁹ 925 D-926 A, trans. Bury, Loeb Library.

ous analogy to Fascist devotion to the "Nation" or Nazi worship of the "Volk"; like the totalitarians in this respect, and we would add, in agreement with most of mankind, Plato thinks of sympathy within the group as an intrinsic good. But the contrast is hardly less obvious. Plato's ideal of community is valid for any city, attainable by men of any race. He is not celebrating devotion to a particular community conceived as standing in hostile opposition to other communities and as entitled by its superior value to outreach and override them. Plato's city is contented to take its modest place among the civilized communities of the world; its superiorities are not to be established at the price of conquest and world domination, but are moral and internal, and remain open to emulation by any other society. Without breach of allegiance to our democratic own, it should be possible for us to pay tribute to that quality of living together in fellowship which Plato praises, and which, so far as we ourselves possess it, we must value among our national treasures.

Racialism. — On many an earlier page we have had to deal obliquely with Popper's belief that he has detected in Plato a haughty racialism mingled of prejudice and hatred against barbarians, and an almost equal contempt for his fellow Greeks of nonaristocratic origin. We have sufficiently shown that Plato did not lack the idea of humanity, or scorn barbarians as such,⁸⁰ and with this charge we shall not be here concerned. But it is time at last to show against our critics⁸¹ that Plato did not divide Greeks themselves into the nobly-born and the base, nor make it one of the principal purposes of his ideal city to preserve the pedigreed purity of its master race.

Plato's racialism, as Popper conceives it, is based upon the conviction that in any well-ordered Greek city (Athens, for instance⁸²) and in particular in the ideal city of the *Republic*, there exist two racially distinct groups of citizens, aristocrats and commoners, represented metaphorically as gold and silver races, on the one hand, and copper and iron, on the other. The main principle of eugenics to be practiced by the guardians in the *Republic* is to avoid contamination of the superior group with the baser blood of the subject class; for this reason it will obviously be impossible to enroll among the guardians any individual who is of worker origin or who possesses even a trace of worker blood. A second principle is the necessity of eliminating from the superior group itself defectives or degenerates; we recollect that the "nuptial number" was supposed to be operative to this end.⁸³

⁸⁰ See App. VII, pp. 601ff., and pp. 201-232.

⁸¹ It will be remembered that Popper has been joined in making this complaint by Neurath and Lauwerys: cf. pp. 441-445. With Popper's thesis will also stand or fall Crossman's earlier mentioned conviction that Plato had set his heart on establish-

ing a dictatorship of the "gentry."

⁸² We have discussed, pp. 459ff., Popper's supposition that Plato himself claimed the right to rule in Athens on the basis of his aristocratic blood.

⁸³ Popper's principal statements of this position will be found on his pp. 81-82, 138-139, 496-497, 555.

To prove that a race-bound system of "castes" or groups distinguished by racial origin alone is here in question, Popper cites Plato's reference in the *Timaeus* to Egyptian caste divisions,⁸⁴ and brings into play also his own special "discovery" that in the *Republic* Plato broadly hints of the origin of the two classes by conquest.⁸⁵ The dread of contamination by worker blood Popper thinks manifested in Plato's talk of "admixtures" of particular metals in given individuals, and of the "mingling" of one metal with another which is, Plato tells us, destined in the end to overthrow the city. Popper finds this dread again expressed in Plato's figurative application to persons unfitted for the well-balanced pursuit of philosophy, of a term which may be translated as "bastard."⁸⁶ The exclusion of "bastards" from membership in the guardian class he finds reaffirmed in the assignment in the *Laws* to slave status, of children half-slave, half-free.⁸⁷ He imagines, further, that he has discovered, at *Republic* 434 A-D, a passage in which Plato has officially withdrawn the prospect of promotion proffered, in the "myth of the metals," to the gifted sons of inferiors, and has branded as the greatest injustice any attempt to cross over from below the boundaries dividing class from class. Popper has still to dispose of Plato's plain statement, in the myth aforesaid, that promotion will be accorded to children born with an admixture of one of the precious metals, which means for Popper, as we now realize, children resulting from forbidden unions between members of different classes. This he does by the familiar coupling of the pair of hypotheses, Plato's dishonesty, which is held particularly to infect the myth, and his guilty hesitancy in betraying his noble Socratic heritage.⁸⁸

The coherence and the resourceful use of minor indications which characterize this argument are indeed impressive; but neglect of context and failure to take into account essential evidence has robbed them of effect. We have already given our reasons for rejecting many of the elements of Popper's case. To meet those that remain will require a renewal of attention to the myth of the metals, which we have paraphrased on an earlier page,⁸⁹ and a closer consideration of its genetic implications. The citizens are to be told that God, in fashioning them, has "mingled" in the generation of each one of them one or another of the four metals; any child who is "golden" or "partly golden" (*hypochrysos*) (we wish to stress that the two forms of expression are used interchangeably) shall become a ruler, and similarly silver, iron, or bronze children, or those tinged with any one of these metals, are to be assigned, each to the appropriate social station.

⁸⁴ See our p. 222.

⁸⁵ See n. 70, p. 426.

⁸⁶ See n. 122, p. 455, and pp. 205-206.

⁸⁷ We have pointed out the lack of true parallelism here, pp. 430-431. Popper, sure that Plato scorned both slaves and workers

to an approximately equal degree, tends to overlook the distinction, basic to any Greek, between even the meanest citizen and a slave; see also n. 85, p. 173 above.

⁸⁸ See our pp. 424ff.

⁸⁹ See pp. 425-426.

The genetic theory presupposed in this myth, read in its entirety, may be analyzed for our purposes into five principles: (1) there are enormous differences in the mental and moral capacities of individual persons; (2) these differences are innate; (3) the capacities of the offspring are normally a direct inheritance from the parents; (4) even in a relatively pure strain, individuals who resemble another, related strain, may appear; (5) the child's innate capacities will become apparent at a relatively early age, even in the absence of a favoring environment. On the basis of these principles, Plato proposes that children shall be sorted out and assigned to their appropriate stations.⁹⁰

The proposals that we have here been expounding are, it is true, embodied in a myth. But if this fact be employed by any critic to cast doubt upon the earnestness of its fundamental meaning,⁹¹ the reply is at hand: some eight Stephanus pages later, in a passage that Popper has wholly ignored, Plato is listing the duties to be imposed upon the guardians, and refers back, as to a matter fixed and agreed upon and of basic importance, to the task "that we mentioned before when we said that if a degenerate offspring was born to the guardians he must be sent away to the other classes, and likewise if superior to the others he must be enrolled among the guardians; and the purport of this was that the other citizens too must be sent to the task for which their natures were fitted, one man to one work, in order that the entire city may come to be . . . a unity."⁹²

Combining the implications of the two passages, we have the right to draw the following significant conclusions: it is Plato's serious purpose to fit each individual's capacity to the social function he is to perform. This being the

⁹⁰ Were we not in this section arguing specifically against Popper and those who, like him, have chosen to identify Plato's eugenic aim with that part of the Nazi program which sought to keep the blood of the preferred race free of contamination with blood of a different racial origin, we should have been obligated at this point in our text to acknowledge and comment upon the similarity of Plato's genetic principles, as here listed, and the proposals he bases upon them, to that other part of the Nazi program which sought to improve the quality of the superior race itself, considered apart from the problem of "purity." To balance the many complex and subtle similarities and differences here would require much more space and time than is at our disposal, but two points are not to be omitted: (1) both Plato and the Nazis pursued the aim of improving the human stock of their respective communities by the application of the eugenic principle of breeding from the "best"; both are open to challenge as having ap-

proved for the purpose the use of means destructive of much that is of high human value. In Plato's favor may be mentioned the lesser sacrifice he was proposing to make, by the measure of the difference between the Athenian and the modern ideal of marriage (cf. pp. 83, 135), and the broader and more universally valid criterion he has proposed for measuring what is "best" (cf. pp. 541-543); (2) Plato shared with the Nazis what is from our modern standpoint the mistaken doctrine that moral potentialities are inheritable, an error certainly more venial in his day, when genetics lay in its infantile speculative beginnings, than was the wilful erroneousness of the Nazis in making a similar supposition in the face of the formidable scientific evidence to the contrary.

⁹¹ See pp. 431ff. for discussion of such criticism.

⁹² *Republic* 423 C-D, trans. Shorey, Loeb Library.

case, it would be impossible for Plato to fix permanently the status of any child on the basis of his pedigree. The child will be provisionally thus assigned, but care will be taken to correct any error that may have occurred.⁹³

Stage-direction at this point: collapse of the main pillar of Popper's argument. As the dust clears, we discern still standing two props large enough to demand special handling. The first of these is the conception that Plato, in speaking of "admixtures" and "mingling," is referring to hybridization. A scrutiny of our recent paraphrase of a portion of the myth of the metals will show that Plato has nothing of the sort in view. He is operating with a fairy-tale conception of a "soul-stuff," as it were, mixed or mingled in each particular individual with one or other of the metals, and the same generic individual who is referred to as "golden" may appear in the next sentence as "partly golden" (*hypochrysos*); again, such persons are said (*Republic* 416 E) to have "gold in their souls." There is no talk of one metal being mingled in a single soul with another metal. What serious opinion lies beneath these mythological metaphors must be elicited from what Plato says elsewhere, and examination of these passages⁹⁴ makes it probable that he had in mind a distribution of human capacities (or sets of capacities), according to what is almost a "normal curve" of frequency,⁹⁵ along a continuous scale of merit, and that his "metals" represent four ranges marked off along this scale. This being the case, an individual could not well be "mixed," though it might be possible to doubt to which of two adjoining ranges he should be assigned.

The one further misunderstandable reference to mixtures occurs at the end of the "nuptial number" passage, where the downfall of the ideal city is being described. The fatal misstep has been taken, unworthy and ill-educated persons have, for lack of better human material, been installed among the rulers, and these "will not approve themselves very efficient guardians for testing . . . our races. . . And this inter-mixture of the iron with the silver and the bronze with the gold will engender unlikeness and unharmonious unevenness, things that always beget war and enmity wherever they arise." Is this mingling, as Popper believes, the result of an interbreeding of classes, a mixture in the veins of individual guardians of "base" and "upper-class blood"? Plato's answer is not long in coming: he pictures the situation as a struggle between two groups within the guardian class, "pulling against each other, the iron and bronze toward money-making — and . . . the golden and silver . . . trying to draw them back to virtue."⁹⁶ Plainly the "inter-mixture"

⁹³ We here make no use of *Timaeus* 19 A, where the determination to allocate children to their proper class on the basis of their innate capacities is reiterated, but in such terms that it is impossible to employ the passage either to prove or disprove Plato's intention of elevating children of workers.

⁹⁴ We mention these below, n. 99, p. 540.

⁹⁵ For this conception see *Phaedo* 89 E-90 B. The one element of it definitely present in the *Republic* is the recognition of the small number of "golden" natures that may be expected.

⁹⁶ *Republic* 546 E-547 B, trans. Shorey, Loeb Library.

of the metals and the "unevenness" here referred to consist in the presence or mingling within the guardian class of individuals belonging to the different types, and not to the presence or mingling in particular individuals of blood derived from separate classes. There is here no question of "race-poisoning," no warning against the transfer into the guardian class of those who are, as individuals, "golden" or "silvern."

There is still to be considered the passage claimed by Popper to confirm his thesis that Plato, has, "in effect, withdrawn" the earlier accorded promise of advancement. Plato, having arrived at the provisional definition of justice as "doing one's own task," is testing its validity by contemplating the results of its violation; and it is agreed between "Socrates" and Glaucon that it will do great harm to the city if "one who is by nature an artisan or . . . money-maker tempted . . . by wealth or command of votes or bodily strength or some similar advantage tries to enter into the class of the soldiers or one of the soldiers into the class of counsellors and guardians, for which he is not fitted," and that "the substitution of the one for the other" class, is "the greatest injury to a state."⁷ We see that Plato does indeed lay a strict prohibition against transition from class to class. But the transitions that are in question here are specified as precisely those that violate the all-important principle of capacity. This is entirely consistent with the earlier expressed promise which Popper supposes to be rescinded here. There is no question of prohibiting the guardians from promoting a man or woman whom they judge fit for rule or for service as a soldier; as the context plainly shows, there is only prohibition against "substitution of one for the other" on any basis other than natural fitness. To rest one's angry gaze upon a sentence, as Popper has done here, in abstraction from its qualifying context — what is this if not to play anagrams with an author instead of reading him?

In the hope that we have succeeded in clearing away the clouds of misconception from Plato's theory of "race" as expressed in the *Republic*, let us ask what this removal now permits us to see. What emerges is, first, a straightforward belief that the highest human value attaches to the discovery — wherever they may be found — of the best-endowed natures and the harnessing of their energies to maximum effect for the common good. Along with this is the belief that, granted the happiest of enabling conditions, the employment of these best-endowed individuals as parents of the next generation would make possible continuous improvement. We see further Plato's belief that the potentiality of moral character forms part of the complex of transmissible traits, thus making possible the unbroken production of men who could safely be entrusted with the power of the philosopher kings. This aspiration toward developing and utilizing the highest human types is what

⁷ *Republic* 434 A-C, trans. Shorey, Loeb Library.

we submit to be the grounds of Plato's utter rejection of racial prejudice in favor of a rational eugenic ideal.

Granted that this was Plato's ideal, it may still be asked how Plato conceived that it would be put in practice. Plato's critics⁹⁸ have pointed out that the guardians would have obvious opportunities for determining which of the children being reared as guardians were of genuine gold or silver quality and which were not, since these children would at all times be under the most careful educational surveillance. But how, it is demanded, would the guardians detect the exceptional sons of workers or money-makers whom they are enjoined to elevate? No machinery for inspection is supplied, no schools for them are even so much as mentioned. Furthermore, as any given child grew older, it would become increasingly difficult for him to make up his deficiencies in training. The only reply possible is that we have here an imperfection in Plato's scheme which, from a practical point of view, is indeed serious. Plato himself is well aware that even among the guardians, it will not be possible to distinguish with certainty until the age of fifty, a silver from a golden nature.⁹⁹ He must then have known, if he reflected on the question, that to draw the line between the abler workers and the less able guardians, would be equally difficult, and that the widening educational gap would make anything like accurate discrimination impossible. This imperfection must simply be accepted, somewhat as we today are forced to accept the danger that injustice will result from the less momentous but still difficult decision that a given young person of borderline abilities shall or shall not be admitted to high school or to college. As for the absence of any machinery for elevating children of the lower classes, this may be simply the result of the high level of generality upon which the *Republic* moves, and cannot be taken as proof that Plato did not entertain the expressed intention, any more than the absence of a Board of Censors proves that Plato did not intend to submit literature and the arts to a strict moral regulation.

It is interesting to note that Plato, before he wrote the *Politicus*, had apparently abandoned the hope that the genetic program of the *Republic* was feasible, or had, at any rate, come to believe that, should such ideal beings as the philosopher kings be brought into being, it would be impossible either to identify them on sight or to convince mankind of their superlative excellence.¹⁰⁰ We know from the *Laws* (951 B) that he retained the belief that men of rare and divine natures come occasionally into existence, but he offered no account of the mode of their production. What is certain is that in the *Politicus* the Statesman, that highly abstract being endowed with perfect political wisdom, attempts no more than to blend in the citizens the sober

⁹⁸ Crossman, p. 281; Fite, pp. 28-30.

⁹⁹ For the successive "screenings" to which the guardians are to be subjected,

see 537 B, 537 D, 539 E-540 A.

¹⁰⁰ *Politicus* 301 C-E.

and gentle temper with the bold and energetic, an endeavor which had formed part, it is true, in the *Republic*, of the plan for producing ideal guardians, but by no means its whole extent. Again, in the *Laws*, an attempt is to be made to persuade citizens to conduct their match-making with this same end in view. In both *Politicus* and *Laws*, Plato has abandoned the ideal entertained in the *Republic* of uniting the entire community into what is in some sense a single kinship group, and by dividing the population into the two essential functional units of slave and free,¹⁰¹ he has drawn a hard and fast line, such as existed in other ancient communities, between the groups.¹⁰² But within the citizen body itself, in neither *Politicus* nor *Laws* is there any hint of a distinction between well-born and commoner like that which he is charged with making in the city of Athens between oligarch and democrat, and with which, when it suits his purpose, Popper equates the distinction in the *Republic* between guardians and workers. In none of his three cities does Plato show any discrimination based on pedigree between citizens.

A brief comparison of Plato's eugenic objectives with those avowed by the Nazis will yield a very fair index of the contrasting value patterns that respectively inspire them. As is notorious, the Nazi breeding schedule was primarily intended to preserve the purity of the master race, an aim which we have been at some pains to show Plato did not share. The type of this race, we remember, was conceived as splendidly "Nordic" in physique, having the virtues of the warrior and the instinct and aspect of leadership. By virtue of their racial origin, thus evidenced, they would be the bearers also of cultural creativeness, and they were of course to have all the ordinary excellences of ability, energy, and so on, added unto them. In addition, maximum numbers were to be produced, to supply material for the operation of natural selection, and for the recruiting of armies of conquest.¹⁰³ With the exception of numbers,¹⁰⁴ and oddly enough, of mental ability, this is substantially the

¹⁰¹ There are of course metics also in the *Laws*.

¹⁰² Plato's line in the *Laws* between slave and free is drawn with exceptional strictness, as we have seen above, p. 186. But as we remember, Athenian law itself rendered marriage between slave and free impossible and contemplated the breeding of new citizens only by those who were themselves full citizens.

¹⁰³ W. M. McGovern, *From Luther to Hitler*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1941, pp. 638-642, provides a well-documented analysis of Nazi eugenics and the racial ideal.

¹⁰⁴ Since Plato recommends both in the *Republic* and the *Laws* the restriction of population increase, Popper has been unable here to draw a parallel with modern

totalitarianism. He has instead ascribed to Sparta (p. 583) the endeavor to restrict population through "infanticide, birth control, and homosexuality," and has then found the same recommendations in Plato. In this charge, Popper has so scrambled historical fact with prejudicial fantasy as to make a brief exposition of his errors difficult. In the first place, it is not certain that the Spartan state (as distinct from individual Spartans) ever desired to restrict population, though it may have done so in its earlier times. Aristotle (*Pol.* II, ix, 1270 a 39 f.) says it encouraged increase, and he has apparently not been confuted by modern inquiry (cf. Busolt-Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde*, München, 1926, I, pp. 702-703). Popper's reference to what Aris-

program that Popper has extracted from his burrowings between the lines of the *Republic*, and presented as Plato's attempt to breed his ideal man. But if we look at the *Republic* itself, what we find is of a quite different weave.¹⁰⁵

tole mentions as the Cretan "lawgiver's" reason for instituting common meals (*Ibid.*, x, 1272 a 23) is not sufficient entirely to offset this testimony. It appears that Spartan state policy sought to insure an excess of potential soldiers, regardless of the hardship inflicted on individuals. In the second place, it was for quite other reasons that the Spartan state sanctioned infanticide, and homosexuality likewise, in so far as it did so sanction it (cf. our discussion of this point, n 33, p 89 above). "Birth control," in the sense of refraining from begetting, the Spartans doubtless did practice certainly unrestricted production of children was not the Spartan way. Plato, while not approving such extreme limitation as practiced by individual Spartans in his day, does recommend refraining from begetting beyond the measure required for a stationary population, saying in one place that both war and poverty will thus be avoided (Rep 372 B-C, 460 A, *Laws* 740 D). He never recommends infanticide for limiting population. Its purpose as both he and the Spartans — and also the Athenians, it appears (cf. pp 195ff) — conceived it, was to insure that the children reared should be sound and vigorous, for the same reason, Plato recommends abortion in certain cases (Rep 461 C). Nor does Plato anywhere sanction indulgent pederastia (cf. *infra*, Chapter 5). Finally, even though it might be shown with certainty that Sparta and Plato alike prescribed population control as a means of avoiding the necessity of expansion and conquest, what is there in this prescription to condemn? It is easy enough to imagine Popper's comments, had it been true, on the contrary, that Plato bred excess citizens and, in consequence, demanded *Lebensraum*.

¹⁰⁵ Plato describes at length these "golden" natures at *Republic* 485-487, and 535 A-536 A. Popper, in presenting (p 147) what he tells us is Plato's ideal of human excellence, has characteristically selected from Plato's text only what suits his purpose. He has chosen to quote from 535 C only the phrases in which Plato lists the necessary but by no means sufficient quali-

ties of the good guardian of the lower rank, which are presupposed also in the exceptional individuals to be chosen as rulers: these must be (Shorey's translation) "the most stable, the most brave and enterprising and, so far as practicable, the most comely," and also "virile and vigorous (*blosyroi*) in temper." Popper renders *blosyroi* as "awe inspiring," and insists (p 559), somewhat tendentiously, that it means "grim" or "inspiring terror"; in so doing, he ignores the fact that at *Theaetetus* 149 A, Socrates half humorously describes his mother as having been a "*blosyra*" midwife — which would seem to remove the necessity that in Plato's pages, the word shall mean "terror inspiring." Popper then omits from his summary of Plato's description all the other qualities, moral and intellectual, which Plato says the future rulers must possess, omissions which very considerably alter the picture. He proceeds to misquote 540 C, where "Socrates" completes his description of the lives of the rulers, who, after spending their declining years in contemplation and self-denying service to the community, die and are honored, says Socrates, as "blessed and godlike men." Glaucon then exclaims to Socrates, "You have finished off your ruling men most beautifully, Socrates, like a sculptor" (Lindsay's version is here employed as showing more clearly than Shorey's how Popper's translation is related to what Plato actually says). This is the same metaphor employed at 420 C ff for describing the ideal state as a whole, what is meant is that Socrates has depicted the rulers as beautiful, not in body alone, but in all respects, particularly in mind and character. Yet Popper, making the phrase part of Plato's description of the future rulers, represents it as referring wholly to the body, translating "sculptured in perfect beauty." In sum, by stressing vigor, "grimness," and physical beauty, and omitting entirely the intellectual and most of the moral qualities, he rouses in our minds a picture of "super-masters" which is wholly foreign to Plato's text.

Plato will seek to produce, for purposes of defense, natures not dominated by the desires and appetites, "watch-dogs" fierce to foes and gentle to friends. He includes bodily excellence, as a matter of course, but always as a subordinate end. But this is not yet his highest type, the type he desires most to produce, that of those exemplary beings, the future philosopher kings. These young men are to be balanced and gracious natures, adding to the basic qualities we have just described keen and retentive minds, and above all eager in the pursuit of theoretic truth.¹⁰⁶ Between them and the Nazi standard intervenes a moral distance it would be difficult to exaggerate.

The Leader and the elite. — In setting apart from the rank and file of his citizens a small minority of specially chosen and trained officials and their armed auxiliaries to constitute an elite by whom, on the topmost level, all policies are determined and through whom, at the next level of command, all decisions are carried out, Plato has been often likened to the modern totalitarians of all three varieties. It is obvious enough that in this respect there exists a structural correspondence of some kind. Just for this reason it is of the greatest importance to note the precise point to which the resemblance runs and at which it is brought to a decisive stop.

As Fite has observed, in any scheme for organizing large numbers of persons for a common purpose, where direction is lodged in one or in very few, some hierarchical structure is a necessity. Where such an organization is a government, we may add, the power of enforcement must be placed at the disposal of the executive, and unless office is hereditary, some institutional means of selecting and training future leaders must be provided. In latter-day totalitarian states, a vast and complicated array of agencies, comprising the party leaders and the party, the various armed services, storm troopers, secret police, and, in addition, special educational institutions, fulfill these functions, whereas in Plato's imagined city, only the philosopher kings and the auxiliaries are made available for all such purposes. But rough parallels can undoubtedly be drawn by anyone not overparticular in demanding exactitude between the elite groups, ancient and modern. We have fresh in our memories Plato's account of the qualities, physical and spiritual, prerequisite for membership in his elite; if now we add what he has told us of their activities, we should be ready to compare them with their modern analogues.

For the guardians of the lower degree, among whom at first are included, as yet unrecognized, those who will later be chosen as rulers, Plato has designed a rearing and education which are to bring them to the highest development of which they are capable (*Republic* 456 E). Living together, boys and girls alike, under the eye of their teachers, they listen to tales of the gods from which all

¹⁰⁶ The degree of intellectual capacity and interest which is presupposed may be inferred from our pp. 544-545 and Appendix XII, pp. 618ff.

moral crudities and frightening pictures of the after-life have been removed (377 ff.), early learn to ride (467 E), read poems in praise of gods and good men (607-608), and play the lyre, in modes both stirring and mild (399 A-B). Held to their studies by play and not by compulsion, they are to be taught the elements of mathematics (536 D-E). The shaping influence of their environment is to count for very much (400 E ff.); since only fair forms and characters are to be impressed upon the products of the craftsmen, they will live among sights of beauty, from which, "like a breeze that brings from wholesome places health,"¹⁰⁷ they will receive into their souls harmony and grace. Hardened by their gymnastic (404), taken out to observe from a distance actual battle (467, 537 A),¹⁰⁸ but made gentle by music and persuasion and reasoned discussion (411), they grow up understanding that their duty will be to put down rebellion within the state should such occur (415 E), but disciplined to live so frugally and with such regard for the rights of others as to render such a rebellion, Plato believes, scarcely conceivable (416-417). A great lack which we observe in this education is any experience of gainful work or of handicraft; but from these Plato will resolutely debar them. Arrived at maturity and now being responsible for the safety of the state, they must, we assume, preserve their military fitness above all else; for the rest, so far as Plato tells us (412 B), they may give themselves over, like the citizens of the *Laws* described above, to hunting, athletic contests, and participation in festival dance and public worship.

For the guardians on the higher level, both men and women, there will be provided, to match their extraordinary intellectual endowment, a far more complete training, quite literally all there is available of rational education. Chosen at the age of twenty to continue their studies on a higher, more abstract plane (537 B ff.), those of them who survive the successive eliminations will spend at least half their time until they are fifty in mathematics and astronomy and in far-ranging discussion of themes logical, ethical, and metaphysical; the remainder will be spent in the practical pursuits of war and "the holding of offices suitable to youth" (539 E). They are now full-fledged rulers,

¹⁰⁷ *Republic* 401 C, trans. Shorey, Loeb Library.

¹⁰⁸ In qualified agreement with Fite, we may remark that it is clear, from what Plato is here proposing, that he is ascribing a positive value to warlike prowess—not, however, as Fite suggests, for the sake of foreign conquest, but because courage is a part of his conception of the totality of human excellence. In contrast to this ennobling activity stood the degradation brought by the "mechanic arts" (cf. our pp. 239 ff.), with which, accordingly, Plato's young guardians are to have no concern. His dis-

taste for these employments carries him so far that he makes "Socrates" declare the guardians-to-be shall not even imitate in dramatic presentations such activities as those of smiths and oarsmen (396 A), and no such skills are to be taught them (522 B). As we have earlier noticed (pp. 240 ff., pp. 259-261), this represents a survival in Plato of a prejudice he was born to, and from which he never succeeded in fully divesting himself, though one finds him in the *Laws* expressing a more adequate appreciation of the humbler arts.

and though we are told that they may devote the greater part of their time to philosophy, each in his turn must toil in the service of the state (540 A-B); nor will this alternation lead to any inconsistency in policy, for to Plato the guardians are interchangeable beings (445 D-E), conceived as knowledge and technique incarnate.

And they will need all the training they bring with them, for what awaits them is an assignment so difficult and so complex as almost to violate Plato's own much heralded principle of single function. Their duties will be on the one hand military and administrative, eugenic and educational on the other. Under the first heading it is their responsibility to see that the city shall not grow too large nor fall away (423 B f.), and shall be neither too rich nor too poor (421 D f.). They must administer justice in the courts (433 E), and formulate such laws and regulations as may be needed (425 C-427 A). Presumably they will command armies, and they will deal diplomatically with neighboring states and send embassies to Delphi.

Their second set of activities is even more demanding. They must plan and conduct the "lotteries" for marriages (459 B f.). They must inspect infants (460 B), and observe the development of every child in the city, so that he may be assigned to his proper class and even, within the worker class, to his proper occupation (423 C-D). They must "build their post of watch" in education, supervising even the children's games (424), and censoring all literature and music, maintaining standards for all the products of the craftsmen. Presumably, like the philosopher-rhetorician of the *Phaedrus*,¹⁰⁹ they must mold public opinion, and must also employ such temperings of truth as are required for the good of the governed (459 C-E). They must watch and test every younger guardian to see whether he (or she) is of true kingly quality (539 D-E), and not least, they must train their own successors in all the higher branches of learning and speculation (540 B), "sowing in fitting souls," to draw once more from the *Phaedrus*, words which will spring up and make their possessors blessed.¹¹⁰

Since it is inconceivable that any very small number of rulers and rulers-in-training could begin to carry out in person so formidable a schedule of duties, either Plato is intending, as Crossman has suggested,¹¹¹ to supply them with a large staff of assistants drawn from the guardians of the second class, or is intending to permit them to hire, as in the *Laws*, experts from other cities or to employ common citizens; or, as is perhaps more probable, Plato has

¹⁰⁹ *Phaedrus* 271 D f. Cf. our discussion, pp. 432-433.

¹¹⁰ *Phaedrus* 276 E-277 A, trans. Fowler, Loeb Library.

¹¹¹ On our view Crossman (p. 117) has carried his analysis into greater detail than Plato, and has, in a manner, honored Plato and at the same time injured him by be-

stowing upon him the credit and responsibility for the conclusions reached. We find ourselves rather among those to whom, as to Jaeger, the *Republic* is not a political architect's design for a system of government bureaus, but a treatise on education set in a frame of ideas psychological, ethical, and metaphysical.

simply not concerned himself with the elaboration of details, but has left the guardians in their philosophical generality as embodied ideals of good government.

Looking back at the just-completed account, we may select from the total description those traits that are relevant to the intended comparison. The auxiliaries present an initial point of contrast. They do not appear comparable to any of the characteristic organs of a modern totalitarian regime. Unlike party members, they do not function as transmitters of ideological instruction to the masses; they are not, like the storm troopers and Gestapo, to be kept busy in serving as strong-arm men or secret police. In their aspect as guards, they resemble much rather a standing army, "established in the city," as Plato says, "with nothing to do," save to be prepared for military action at call. But Plato has not dissolved them in their function. Like the other citizens, they are conceived as living the life according to virtue, a life exemplified in them more perfectly than in the workers, in view of their considerable endowment and cultivation, but desirable in itself on every level.

Plato's philosopher kings also, and still more patently, achieve value by the mere activity of living as the most perfect vehicles of human excellence. As bearers of political power, Plato has set upon them the special seal of commitment to the impersonal decrees of reason, ability to discern and to apply disinterestedly the results of their rigorous philosophical inquiry. They are thus themselves strict subjects to an external and incorruptible authority, from which spring truth and good. And that this is no afterthought, no fraudulent garment designed to cover the nakedness of arbitrary power, is evidenced by the central and culminating position given to the vision of the Good, and by its inseparable connection with the theory of the forms, itself the mainspring of the Platonic philosophy.

In view of this subordination to a higher principle, it is no accident that the bearers of Plato's standards should not be presented to us as themselves the sources of light and bestowers of grace. Anonymous, interchangeable, belonging indifferently to either sex, there is nothing in them to suggest the mystical energies, the charismatic emanations characteristic of a Duce or a Fuehrer. They are economically dependent, possessing neither land nor private dwelling, receiving like the public slaves at Athens a salary sufficient only for their frugal maintenance. Significantly, they are not conceived as dynamic figures evoking perpetual revolution or leading their people forward toward unlimited conquests. Plato has stamped his own *ethos* upon his rulers: they are to be men in whom harmony and temperance and the strict honoring of justice are valued high above force and turbulence. Plato's elite go quietly about their tasks, in a community at rest and, so far as possible, at peace within its borders, quiet Olympians in contrast to heaven-storming Titans.

We must leave to the reader's accountancy the final appraisal of the real distance separating Plato's "leaders" and "elite" from their modern analogues. But before dismissing this topic, it is well to remember that we have all the

while been comparing to the actual totalitarianisms of our time Plato's visionary and carefully safeguarded ideal. And we have certain knowledge that at the first departure from the ideal, from the "sacred line," as Plato calls it in the *Laws* (739 A), Plato instantly drops from his program any persons or offices such as those we have been discussing.¹¹² His belief in the authority of right over freedom has not abated, but there are in the second-best city no persons who are its special vehicles. Law is here the ruler (715 D). The citizens are on a virtual parity, and all alike bear arms; officials are elected and chosen by lot, and in addition are subject to a degree of accountability for their every act beyond modern practice, even under democracy (945-948). And for this abolition of personal control Plato gives reasons similar to those we should ourselves offer, — the inability of the mortal nature in general to resist the corruptions of unrestricted power (713 C, 875 A-C), and the necessity that every citizen should feel himself a member of the state (768 A-B). In Sicily we saw him recommending constitutional monarchy, with emphasis upon the "rule of law." In the face of these facts, it would be something less than justice to hold Plato responsible for the manifold evils that have issued from the reckless application of the principle of the "leader" and the "elite."

"Uniformitarianism," the "closed society,"¹¹³ indoctrination, and censorship. — We are about to meet what we have earlier acknowledged to be the principal unacceptable element actually present in Plato's political thought, out of which, by exaggeration and unwarrantable extension, most of the charges against him have been developed. All the detractors are at one in finding in Plato this fault, calling it by various names which do not obscure their central agreement; it appears also in some form in the lists of all our nonpartisan observers of modern totalitarianism. It is incumbent on us, therefore, conscientiously to expound that aspect of Plato's thought upon which these criticisms converge, and taking upon ourselves, for the moment, the detractorial function, to make out as strong a case against Plato as justice demands. There will be time and place later for such rebuttal as justice permits.

Looking first at the *Republic*, which has naturally been the chief target of criticism, the libertarian reader has his misgivings first awakened as early as Book II, where Plato begins his description of the education of the guardians, sketched above. For here one comes gradually to perceive that Plato is commending an all-embracing censorship, not indeed in direct application to

political affairs, but in the important sense of completely controlling the education provided for the future protectors and directors of his state. Wherever we look in this educational scheme, we find him bending and molding the young souls into the form demanded by his uncompromising moral ideal, encompassing them round and about, as we have seen, with every influence of carefully chosen and adapted tales and poems, fair sights and sounds, exercises and martial experiences, which shall attune them to a mood of steadfast courage tempered with the gentle and concessive spirit.

In pursuance of these aims, Plato will restrict and forbid. He will censor the tales told by mothers and nurses (377 B f.), and frown upon changes in children's games (424 E). He will banish from the whole city, although reluctantly and, be it noted, provisionally only, all dramatic performances and epic poetry (607-608). Artisans are to be supervised, the musical modes severely curtailed. And when once all has been rightly ordered, supreme care must be exercised lest "innovation" and "lawlessness" creep in and, ruining first the characters of men, end by destroying the laws and constitution (424 D-E).

Searching for further areas of control in Plato's state, we meet the same pattern in every quarter, with one exception. From top to bottom, this community is ordered by superior wisdom. Those who are selected to receive advanced training, it is true, are invited to pursue free inquiry, and the few who have attained the status of ruler become directors of their own consciences. Plato, conceiving that truth is one for all men, indeed presupposes that they will find at the very end of their search only what he, following the Socratic footsteps, had himself discovered, and that they will gladly submit to its authority, yet, in principle, he sets them at liberty to follow the dictates of their own reason, and it is expected that they will extend and deepen existing insights. But when once they have ascended to the vision, they become for all other citizens of the Platonic state the determiners of the very meaning of goodness. Theirs is veritably "the place of wisdom," and upon them devolve those many tasks of decision and direction which we recently described. It will be under their supervision, moreover, that the sick will be attended by physicians who are enjoined to proceed on the assumption that no member of the guardian group has leisure to be an invalid and that, like any poor carpenter in an ordinary Greek city, any guardian whose body cannot be cured must be allowed to die; and by decision of these rulers also, any whose soul is judged incurably corrupt, must be put to death. In short, the rightness of the ideal city is measured by the degree of its conformity to the guardians' commands.¹¹⁴

This, then, is the aspect of the *Republic* in which the horrified detractors have found an element truly central both to totalitarianism and to Plato's

¹¹⁴ References for this paragraph include *Rep.* 498 B-C, 537 D ff., esp. 538 D, 540 A-B; 405 C-408 B, 410 A.

political thought. In that strictly delimited sense of the word to which reference was made above, it makes of him a "totalitarian."¹¹⁵ Plato's attempt to mold and control the citizen's every impulse, belief, and action, repels us as we imagine ourselves thus manipulated. We observe that, as in our own day, the control of opinion entails censorship of art and literature and the subordination of education to this end; and we are prone to carry further the consequences, and to imagine for ourselves other effects which we well know must have followed any attempt to actualize the *Republic*, the punishment of innovators and the deadening of all spontaneity by fear and self-righteous intolerance.

And if we turn to the *Laws* seeking a more moderate and concessive attitude, we find, surprisingly enough, that in this respect there is little to choose between the two cities.¹¹⁶ Here there are, as we have seen, no philosopher kings and no auxiliaries, and there is some lessening of the state's direct control

¹¹⁵ Considerations such as these have apparently prompted Elliott and McDonald, in their influential textbook, *Western Political Heritage*, 1949, to classify Plato (p. 12) as a totalitarian of a particular type, though distinct from any of the actual totalitarians of our day; see their pp. 626 and 851, where the imposition of ethical beliefs by the state upon its citizens is said to justify this name. It should be noted, however, that in addition to what are called "trappings" of totalitarianism, such as a one-party system and an elite, and beside the use of terror and repression (p. 858), these writers set up at least one other central and much emphasized criterion of totalitarianism, of which, as we have already recorded (n. 50, p. 521), they explicitly exonerate Plato: this is the advocacy of amoral power, which acknowledges no authority above itself. A related "totalitarian" trait, that of regarding human nature as weak, and therefore as incapable of "rational control of its environment" (p. 6), is not detected in Plato; presumably he is cleared of this imputation by his acknowledged allegiance to the pursuit of rational knowledge and his belief that his guardians, at least, would be capable of employing it for political ends. Elliott and McDonald, moreover, know Popper's book, and have taken pains (p. 86) to reject Popper's inclusion of Plato among "historicists," and to credit Plato with having held firmly to the Socratic doctrine of free moral inquiry. In short, the position taken by these writers is in general agreement with that maintained in the present book, if we except the

unfortunate use of the term "totalitarian" for a thinker who fails to exhibit traits which are justly called basic to this political outlook, and secondly, if we be granted leave to correct certain relatively slight misrepresentations of Platonic purposes which Elliott and McDonald apparently have inadvertently accepted from Popper. As examples of these we may cite their account on pp. 93-94 of the common citizens in Plato's *Republic*; rejecting emphatically, as they do, Popper's belief that Plato would not elevate able commoners, they still imply that only in this one respect is there any significant difference between the status of these citizens and that of the oppressed Spartan Helots. On pp. 94 and 98, they reproduce Popper's charge that Plato believed himself the possessor of a "secret method" of mating, which he intentionally conceals. On p. 447, Hobbes, otherwise condemned as a proto-fascist, is credited with "addressing his book to the reason of men," in contrast to the "elitist . . . oligarchist or aristocrat," Plato. The implication of this phrase that Plato perhaps addressed his books (as Popper sometimes implies) to the conspiratorial oligarchic underground at Athens, rather than to the "reason" of the educated Greek public of his day, is surely not intended.

¹¹⁶ The *Politicus*, so far as it is possible to judge, represents a city midway between the *Laws* and the *Republic* in its institutions, but differing not at all in the degree of Plato's determination to secure unanimity in belief among its citizens.

over the citizens' lives. Yet law, laid down by the city's founders, and honored as divine reason, controlling the life of the community as gods of old shepherded the human flock, is equally authoritative. Though Plato recognizes that the march of time must entail changes, he still wishes any innovation to be regarded as unthinkable except those initiated in rare instances by the council of the Law-wardens with the consent of every citizen; and he hopes custom and public opinion will enforce still further uniformities.¹¹⁷ Dramatic displays are to be permitted, even encouraged, but there is to be strict censorship, and Plato proposes to sanctify the exact dances and kinds of song appropriate to all festivals. It is in the *Laws* that Plato makes the solemn pronouncement so much stressed by Popper, that anarchy must be utterly rooted out of the lives of men. And it is in the *Laws*, too, as we recall, that Plato explicitly faces the consequences only latent in the *Republic* and accepts the necessity in extreme cases of exacting the penalty for failure to conform: death to the atheist who cannot be convinced of his error by patient argument.

Surveying the sum total of these Platonic doctrines, we are tempted, at some cost in consistency, to moderate our indignation against Plato's defamers, and to understand how as the bulldogs of modern democratic ideals they have felt called upon to growl most fiercely at this suspicious stranger from antiquity. We have before us here a most unacceptable complex of attitudes, incompatible with our own, and so built into the structure of Plato's political fabric that their removal involves the immediate collapse of the Republic, considered as a model for the distribution of powers in any actual society, and calls for fundamental changes in the polity of the *Laws*. Those of us who wish still to draw upon Plato for instruction must be prepared, in consequence, to make far-reaching adaptations and selections. The practicability of this operation we shall seek to establish in a later section. Meanwhile we shall consider the fault itself, and in uncovering the motives which led Plato to recommend such all-inclusive control, isolate its peculiar quality, and distinguish it both from the oppressions practiced by the totalitarians and from what the detractors have supposed Plato to be about.

Of prime importance is the distinction between Plato the philosopher, moving on the plane of the theoretic and the ideal, and a modern dictator, who has carried into practice what he proposed, and of whom we know that he did not draw back from the last bloody consequences of his principles. It was Plato's magnificent illusion that all substantial rights and wrongs could be identified and ranked in order of importance, and that it would then be possible to design and set forth as an ideal both the pattern of the good life and that of the good society. Among his predecessors, Hippodamas and

¹¹⁷ The passages referred to in this sentence are *Laws* 713 E-714 A, 715 C-D; 798 A-B, 769 D f., 772 A-D, and 951 B-C. For

the three sentences which follow we may cite 779, 816-817; 942 C; 907 D ff.

Phaleas had devised ideal constitutions calling for a radical reworking of existing practice, extending from the institution of functional social classes among the citizens (Hippodamas) to Phaleas' equalization of property and proposal to make municipal slaves of all artisans.¹¹⁸ Among his contemporaries and fellow Socratics, perhaps Antisthenes, and certainly a little later, Xenophon, projected their moral ideals into a political romance. It is then not surprising that Plato in the *Republic* gave free rein to his moral imagination, setting himself the twofold question, "What is the best life for man and what is the character of the community whose citizens will enjoy such a way of life?"

Since, then, he was by hypothesis presenting his ideal city, he could well feel free to dictate to its citizens in all respects, or, to put it otherwise, to depict them as willing to accept complete direction; since, further, he was planning a whole society, he was at liberty to prescribe not laws only, but customs and religion as well. Thirdly, it is to be noticed that even if we take the *Republic* as in some sense presented as realizable, he was offering it to the Greek world for acceptance as an ideal, not imposing it, complete to the last logical consequence, on any actual community. As the *Laws* shows, he was presupposing that every departure from the ideal pattern of the *Republic* would entail corresponding and compensating changes in the distribution of authority within the state; the "third-best state," we may well suppose — enjoying only "third-best" rulers or laws — would have been so planned as to leave still further areas open to individual decision and control. There is no certainty that had his repressions met with resistance, he would actually have enforced them; for here another principle, the piety for fellow citizens and the horror of shedding kindred blood, might well have stayed his hand; confronted in actual practice with the necessity of employing the ancient equivalent of concentration camp and firing squad, he might well have recommended, instead, the abandonment of censorship. These considerations diminish somewhat the oppressiveness of the minutely detailed and all-pervasive regulations; they would appear to remove entirely the suggestion of personal autocracy imported into Plato's scheme by the presence of the philosopher kings, and they go far to lessen his offense in proposing the death penalty for atheists. But they do not diminish his responsibility for believing that knowledge of the right must come from above, and that it may with justice be bestowed on the less enlightened — if necessary, imposed — without their prior consent.

We have seen the importance of distinguishing Plato's exposition of ideals and proposals from the historical actualities of a modern dictatorship. A second difference between Plato and the totalitarians lies in the benefits which they respectively hoped to achieve for their citizens. In addressing himself to the designing of an ideal society, Plato did not cease to be the man whom Socrates had taught to believe the ideal coincidence of right knowing with right

¹¹⁸ These two ideal states are described by Aristotle, *Politics* II, chapters vii and viii.

doing, and of both with happiness. There was thus laid the ground plan for a society based on the apprehension of truth and offering to its citizens as its chief contribution to their welfare access to this truth and the opportunity of living lives in accordance with it. If now we add the unfortunate conviction, also rooted in the thought of Socrates, that the true expert, the man who knows and can benefit souls, is of rare occurrence, the outlines of Plato's city begin to be clear. It will be the home of individuals, most of them communicating with truth only by proxy, but each of them thus supplied with the conditions for realizing to the full his own capacity for virtue and therefore for happiness; and as the moral expert specializes in the benefitting of souls, so every other member of the society is a specialist, and each will contribute to the common life the benefit he is peculiarly fitted to confer. It is not so much a communism and sharing of material commodities as a communism of interactive services, designed to effect the virtuous happiness of all and each. And as the communal work proceeds, the workers of every class are to be warmed with a genuine sense of mutuality, that happy breaching of the wall dividing "mine" from "thine," both for weal and woe, which we earlier noted as among the values acceptable to totalitarian and democrat alike. But the right of self-determination, as liberals would conceive it, is not for Plato's citizens. Since neither Socrates nor Plato appears ever to have doubted that every man in his deepest heart desires virtue, for them the vital question of individual choice cannot arise; freedom becomes identical with the acceptance of the pronouncements of reason, and he is most free who best obeys ideal authority.

From these principles derive the hierarchical structure of Plato's social order and the predetermined tasks of its members. These, and not the cynical opportunism, the narrow racialism, or the fanatical materialist faith of a totalitarian regime, determine the purposes to which indoctrination in Plato's city is dedicated, and set the limits within which, if we imagine it put to the test of practice, the Platonic regimentation would function. Though Plato has blurred the edges of his intention by admitting the employment of myth and the occasional medicinal lie, it cannot be doubted that his fundamental aim is the inculcation of truth, and that he has at heart not some external cause or selfish interest, but the good of the citizens themselves.

But wherever the service of these values — truth and the citizens' good — gives warrant, there Plato sanctions the intervention of wisdom united with power to control the citizens' every act and thought, and there results that obliteration of any area of individual decision which we have spread upon the record above, and which marks Plato's true kinship to the dictators.

It is only too easy to be guilty of injustice to Plato here, seeing as clearly as we do the enormous price that his proposals, if carried into effect, would exact. What we forget is that to Plato this price was almost invisible, negligible in terms not only of the community's good, but on balance, for each individual citizen likewise. The restrictions he imposed involved, as he saw the

matter, no moral cost, while such values of other sorts as he was consciously preparing to resign he could scarcely weigh in the same scales with those to be achieved. He was, as he well knew, demanding that the guardians in the Republic should resign much that for the ordinary mortal makes life most livable; Adeimantus, voicing here the world's standpoint, protests as we have seen against the deprivations imposed upon them by their barracks existence and their poverty. Glaucon, again, is dismayed that the rulers themselves should be required to descend from the heights of speculation into the busy dust of civic affairs. And when "Socrates" provisionally banishes the poets, it is not without an expression of reluctance, as of one who suffers a personal loss. The common citizens, for their part, are called upon to abjure all participation in government, though this will be a lesser sacrifice, since (Plato believes) they will recognize and welcome the disinterested expert when he appears. In the *Laws*, too, Plato requires of the citizens much that he knows they will find difficult, at least at first.

But Plato has steeled himself against such weaknesses. With the same confident assurance with which Socrates, in the *Apology*, had declared that "no harm can befall the good man," he is implicitly asserting that no loss can accrue to those who aim at goodness. He is translating into social terms the sentence of Socrates in the *Phaedo*, denying the commensurability of calculated pleasures and pains with the one true coinage of virtue. He is proposing to require his citizens to act on the principle implied by the founder of Christianity in the question, "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world . . . ?" Here, as so often in Plato's prescriptions of social policy, we may ignore or even deplore the material content, while finding in its supporting "maxim" pure morals and high religion. Thus, if we are willing, for the moment, to regard the situation not from the standpoint of the expectable results, but in terms of Plato's aim, we can see that he believed himself to be obtaining at very small cost — a cost, moreover, which in the Republic, as he envisaged it, would be borne principally by those who could best afford and best sustain the loss — the highest good of all. Plato's proposals, however illiberal some of them may be, rise from genuine benevolence and aim at the realization of a high ideal.

We must now digress to consider an aspect of Plato's state only distantly related to totalitarianism as usually conceived, namely, its stability, a theme to which Popper has directed his hostile attention. To stabilize his city, or rather to "arrest" or "petrify" it, was, if we credit Popper, Plato's overriding aim.¹¹⁹ In discussing the value of social stability, we are clearly in a region where rival and contradictory truisms can be only too easily interchanged, where sanity and significance depend upon a just recognition of the degree of

¹¹⁹ See Appendix XV, which is directed against Popper's belief that, for Plato's metaphysics, change is unqualified evil.

stability to be commended, and the situation to which it is applicable. Gilbert Murray has pointedly remarked that, on the evidence of anthropology, "Inherited Conglomerates" or traditional bodies of belief, around which all societies are organized, "have practically no chance of being true or even sensible"; yet "no society can exist without them or even submit to any drastic correction of them without social danger."¹²⁰ Anthropologists and social psychologists have offered impressive descriptions of the social cost of accelerated change: the discrediting of what had been regarded as the wisdom of tradition and experience, the bewilderment and loss of social responsibility both on the part of the younger generation, deprived of guidance, and on the part of their

¹²⁰ Quoted from *Greek Studies*, 1946, by Gilbert Murray, p. 67, in E. R. Dodds' *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 1951, p. 192. The apparent conservatism of the sentence quoted does not prevent Murray from stoutly advocating that at least some members of a given society should make a critical examination of the "Inherited Conglomerate" from a point of view external to it. Professor Dodds' book, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, may be characterized, so far as it deals with the matters of our concern, as "two cheers" for Plato, who is roundly praised for his perception that the thin rationalism of his predecessors was an insufficient basis for morals and for his energetic attempt, especially in the *Laws*, to preserve the framework of rationalism while introducing into it provision for the training and control of the irrational element in human behavior. The third cheer is withheld from him on grounds highly reminiscent of Popper, whose book Dodds knows and cites approvingly (p. 255). Thus Dodds interprets Plato's *Laws* as a proposal for "a completely 'closed' society, to be ruled not by the illuminated reason but (under God) by custom and religious law", the institutions Plato has devised are little more than means to "the conditioning of human cattle" (Dodds, p. 216). And in support of these assertions, Dodds cites (p. 229) the same seemingly oppressive passage from the *Laws* (cf. our pp. 531ff.) which had been so prominently displayed by Popper. Dodds also fails to note that it forms part of Plato's discussion of military training, or to point out explicitly that in other sections of the *Laws*, Plato provides for his city, in the Night Council, a window (small though it be) open both to philosophic reason and to the experience of other societies (cf. our

p. 517). Like Popper, again, Dodds believes (pp. 223-224) that Plato would have included Socrates among his condemned atheists, and that Plato's sole reason for executing such disbelievers was the desire to save the social fabric from "contamination by dangerous thoughts", we have argued these points on pp. 560, 521, n. 555.

It is also matter of regret to me that Dodds should have lent the authority of his name to a hazardous speculation which finds the origin of the higher philosophic education of Plato's guardians in the *Republic*, together with some experiences declared in the Platonic myths to be shared in some degree by all human souls before birth and after death, in a cross-fertilization of Socratic rationalism by an originally Asiatic "shamanism," according to which the literal detachment of the shaman's soul from his body and its journeying into distant occult regions form the basis of his esoteric wisdom and consequent supernatural authority in the community of his followers. To see in Plato's guardians, in consequence, "a new kind of rationalized shamans" is to take a long step down a path converging ultimately with Popper's explicit degradation of Plato's philosopher king into that sorry shaman—supposedly Plato himself—who traffics in breeding taboos.

Finally, however, it is interesting to notice that, though Dodds employs many of Popper's same categories and terms—"open society," "fear of freedom," the results of his application of them to Plato are strikingly different. Plato remains, for him, an essentially admirable and nobly disinterested thinker, whose understanding of the needs of men and whose prescriptions for the solution of the social problems of his day were second to none.

elders, deprived of status and of their anticipated honors and rewards.¹²¹ Alterations of custom and belief must always be possible in any acceptable society; it is no one's intention to deny this obvious truth; but it is equally obvious that they are more safely made if they are gradual and, at any one time, not too extensive. And in any case, the desirability of change and its approvable extent remain essentially related to the worth and quality of the particular society in question. One may easily conceive social situations in which radical surgery would be as wisely recommended as, in contrary instances, it might be judged unlikely to produce benefits equal to its cost. It follows that Plato's desire for stability in his ideal cities, however unwelcome some of the means proposed for securing it, will be open to censure only in so far as he has transgressed these limitations.

Plato, we must remember, had lived through the greater part of the Peloponnesian war, and had seen city after city, including his own, rent with faction and overcome by external force; he believed, moreover, that he had witnessed the final stages in the moral decline of Athens from the "men of Marathon" to the shrewd and selfish habitués of the courts whom he shows in the *Theaetetus*. Thus warned, he could scarcely fail to set high value upon stability as an ingredient of any admirable constitution and to give earnest consideration to means of securing it, once the presence of other values had been assured. Plato did not, as we have seen, preclude the possibility that even his perfect city might undergo change in an upward direction, and indeed provided for it in a general way; but in the case of a thing believed to be already so excellent, provision against deterioration might well appear more pressing. And yet, having chosen wisdom, like Solomon he could congratulate himself — so he believed — upon having not only happiness but stability added unto him. For the internal organization of his state, by its promotion of all forms of civic excellence, by its production of individuals inwardly harmonized and just, and by its provision for the interests of every group and member, was, in theory at least, in perfect equilibrium. Even the censorship, with its prohibition of unlicensed innovation, even the limitation of religious freedom in the *Laws*, must not be construed as mere instruments of conservation. If his community had been scheduled for dissolution before the year was out, Plato would still have wished its art and its religion to remain undefiled to its final hour. That they would also promote the city's stability was an added blessing.

This belief in a consilience of genuine goods is a recurrent feature of Plato's thought which has more than once engendered misunderstanding. Thus we found Plato believing in a kind of preëstablished harmony between the good

¹²¹ For an alarming but soberly documented analysis of the devastating effects of accelerated social change upon our own American culture, see Bloch, *Disintegration, Personal and Social*, 1952. A detailed case

history of the virtual collapse of an American Indian society under the stress of social forces too swift for its assimilation is provided by Margaret Mead's *The Changing Culture of an Indian Tribe*, 1932.

of the well-tempered whole and the good of each of its members, a belief which Popper mistook for an exclusive concern for the whole. Similarly, we have seen that Plato believes self-benefit an inseparable concomitant of doing justice to others, a belief which Fite has mistaken for sheer self-regarding prudence. So here, Plato, maintaining that stability will inevitably wait upon the virtue of a community as a whole and of all its citizens, has again been misunderstood; in particular, his insistence that freedom from disunion within the ruling group — a necessary condition for the continued existence of any city — will go hand and hand with their scrupulous regard for the rights of their humble fellow citizens and their piety toward each other as kinsmen, has been taken by Popper as proof that he is merely advocating the arrest of change and seeking to achieve class discipline. Popper is of the opinion that for no other reason than this Plato has forbidden to the guardians private property, the private family, and the extremes either of poverty or wealth, and has endeavored to restrict them from practising the extremes of depredation upon their human cattle. As Popper interprets Plato's intention, the guardians are to be still further unified by their awareness of the enormous caste gulf which separates them from the racially and educationally inferior subject citizens, and it is only for the sake of stabilization, also, that the philosopher kings are to be elevated, like so many prestigious totem poles of mysterious superiority, above the common herd.¹²²

We have earlier exposed the illusory character of this caste gulf in its racial aspect, and have reaffirmed the obvious sincerity of Plato's intention to impart the best possible higher education to his philosophers. No text supports Popper's attribution to Plato of an intention to open a psychological chasm of conscious superiority between guardian and common citizen.¹²³ Aristotle may have been justified in his more limited criticism, in which Popper would have been wiser to join him, that Plato's arrangements would not, in fact, have achieved the contemplated unity.¹²⁴ But as Aristotle assumes, and as we were just now urging, this would have been by no means for lack of such intention on Plato's part. Nor is it a suspicious circumstance, as Popper has whispered,¹²⁵ when Plato asks his guardians to deem "nothing more shameful than lightly to fall out with one another," and to harbor no thoughts of enmity toward kith and kin or fellow citizen;¹²⁶ it is not for the sake of mere prudence that Plato

¹²² Popper, pp. 49, 50, 53, 54, 145-146.

¹²³ Popper may have in mind (though he does not here name it) that scornful attitude to the "hanoasic" tasks of the common citizens which, as we have seen, Plato expects his guardians to share with most well-to-do Greeks of his day and, to a considerable degree, with himself; cf. our discussion, pp. 239ff. But Plato has provided ample evidence that despite this unresolved conflict in his thought, thus reflected in the

attitude he imputes to the guardians, he expects the guardians to feel obligated as kinsmen to benefit and serve the workers, and to form with them a unified city, even a "collective" of shared griefs and satisfactions.

¹²⁴ *Politics* II, v, 1264 a 26.

¹²⁵ Popper, p. 501.

¹²⁶ *Republic* 378 C, trans. Shorey, Loeb Library.

forbids them to plunder and enslave the workers. To see in this only rigid class discipline and the determination to arrest all social change more securely than did even Sparta, is to refuse Plato the right to testify to his own deepest conviction that piety, and justice to those whom it is in one's power to harm,¹²⁷ are sovereign goods.

Reverting to our theme of Plato and totalitarianism, we have now to examine his educational program, to which, as we have seen, he looked as the chief agent of his purposes. We have already exhibited some of its brighter features, its vast superiority to its supposed Spartan model, and the contrast of its intended human products with the totalitarian Leader and his elite. But there are still points to be added in Plato's favor. The modern liberal will find himself in agreement with Plato's disavowal of compulsion in the educative process, a striking parallel to his more inclusive appeal to persuasion, of which we earlier had much to say.¹²⁸ As the divine persuasion of the *Timaeus* is, in some sort, the schoolmaster to Necessity, persuading it to assume order and form, so likewise Platonic education, rejecting constraint, will employ gentler measures: "a free soul ought not to pursue any study slavishly . . . nothing that is learned under compulsion stays with the mind," says the Socrates of the *Republic* (536 E), adding the modern-sounding prohibition of which we have already spoken, "Do not . . . keep children to their studies by compulsion but by play."¹²⁹ Approvable, too, on modern principles is the Platonic recognition of the respective claims of physical and mental education, the skillful manner in which he has linked the two in a functional partnership in which the body is treated with no ascetic mortification or neglect, but nevertheless is made to serve under the direction and ultimately for the sake of its senior partner, the soul.

It is also possible to offer in terms valid for a democratic society, some justification for Plato's belief that the educational process can properly be used to mold citizens into conformity with the demands of the culture within which they are to live.¹³⁰ We must walk warily in this region of controversy,

¹²⁷ Cf. pp. 829-830 above, and for scrupulousness in the use of power, e.g., p. 179 and n. 133, p. 296.

¹²⁸ See pp. 431-438.

¹²⁹ Trans. Shorey, Loeb Library.

¹³⁰ The endeavor of any state to educate its citizens in accord with a moral ideal, as Plato proposes to do, has called from Popper a condemnation with which it is possible partly to agree. He argues (pp. 422-423, 459-460) that since education in our schools today is a compulsory association of pupils with the teacher, the latter has no right to try to impose a scale of values; and as we have seen (p. 419) he also maintains that the state is properly to be conceived as

a protective device, not as an agent of moral control and direction of its citizens, and that therefore it should be allowed to do little more educationally than to see that the young are "protected from . . . neglect" and that "all educational facilities are available to everybody" (pp. 109-110). To say with Crossman "that it is madness to allow the minds of children to be molded by individual taste" seems to Popper to "open wide the door to totalitarianism" (p. 129). "Too much state control in education is a fatal danger to freedom" (p. 110). While we should heartily agree to this last statement if allowed to interpret it, we also agree with Crossman: we feel that Popper

but there is a fundamental responsibility involved in the educational relationship with which the liberal must somehow make his peace. Young children are helpless to make choices for themselves, and cannot be left individually on desert islands, each to achieve his own self-development. Whether we like it or not, the social circumstances in which the child is placed will in large degree determine what he becomes, nor can the parents alone be left to determine what this shall be. It appears wiser that conscious direction, provided by society, shall intervene to guide the process as far as may be toward the socially desired ends. We differ from Plato, in our modern day, by having as our goal for every child, and at a far earlier age than Plato hoped to achieve it for his rulers, the capacity for self-direction, and the influence of this aim will work its way from the upper levels of our educational system, though with diminishing effect, down the age scale. But at the earliest ages and for many of the later school years in preponderant degree, we shall, like Plato, be seeking to mold the child as we think best for him and for our society as a whole. For this reason Plato's humane ideal of balanced adjustment of soul and body and of the harmonious integration of the soul itself, retains status even to this day, requiring to be supplemented rather than abandoned.

But even on the intermediate level and touching the very issue of political indoctrination, we believe that an armed truce can be arranged between Plato's representatives and the more reasonable of Plato's liberal critics. According to the signs of our educational times, there is a respectable and growing minority opinion in liberal quarters that "indoctrination" in the basic values of our democratic culture pattern is a necessity to the healthy survival of democracy itself. By way of fair example, we may call to witness a staunch and highly enlightened defender of the democratic process against all authoritarian attack, Professor Karl Friedrich. In *The New Belief in the Common Man* we are offered a shrewd and fresh analysis of the dangers and evils of the proposed alternatives to democracy, and, on its positive side, some constructive suggestions for the further improvement of the democratic process itself. Indoctrination is almost the villain of the piece, and Friedrich does not

is taking too extreme a position, and that for two reasons. He appears, first, to conceive education almost wholly as if the pupils were already adult, and thus fails to recognize the inevitable moral effect of the school. Education is not the mere provision of "educational facilities," cafeteria tables from which already mature persons select what they need. It seems clear also that "the state" of which Popper is thinking is a threatening monster, and not the beneficent agent of the public will which stands nearer to the norm of our experience. As we have blamed Plato above for subjecting the slave too much to his master and thus depriving

him of rightful access to the more impartial justice of public law, and as we have approved Plato's opposite course in respect to women, so here we believe that Plato and not Popper is more largely right: though we should conceive the state not, as Plato conceives it, as the embodiment of moral knowledge, but as the representative of its citizens in their capacity as parents, agreeing upon basic needs and minimum moral requirements, we should maintain that the state must educate its children, and must not leave them wholly to their own or their parents' private direction.

stop short of condemning the practice of educating children for democracy, if by that phrase is meant the prescription of any, even the most fundamental beliefs.¹³¹ This would seem to be a position antipodal to Plato, but we have yet to hear a most important qualification. Our critic of prescription is convinced that "education is concerned with shaping human beings in the light of a believed-in ideal," and deems it "essential that the schools . . . step in . . . to mould as many young people . . . as possible" into the pattern required for "the conduct of its civic affairs."¹³² A high educational authority, Professor Kilpatrick, in a recent article, "Crucial Issues in Educational Theory,"¹³³ vigorously maintains that the primary task of American education is "to furnish the character traits . . . necessary to support and implement the desired civilization," with its basic ideals of the several freedoms and of equality, and declaring that the present deep division in our country and the world constitutes the major threat to contemporary civilization, he calls upon education to assist in achieving "a common outlook on life." It is apparent that in thus recognizing that education must accept the responsibility for promoting the basic values of the community, even for achieving unity and harmony, Friedrich and Kilpatrick and Plato, despite the sharp difference in political aim, are at one. Taken by itself, therefore, this trait would make Plato a democrat or a totalitarian at choice.

The censorship of art, that other major vehicle of Plato's social restrictiveness, can be more briefly dealt with. We make no defense of Plato's excessive paternalism, which would keep his citizens in aesthetic nonage all their days, sheltered from the mimicked passions and immoral acts presented by Homer and the dramatists, and from the siren sweetness of the Lydian and Ionian modes. Nor can we join him in his proscription of innovation. For us, of course, the arts are essentially a continuum of innovation, and whatever form is no longer capable of yielding some significant variation we consider as a candidate for possible canonization, but no longer fit for creative use. We can, on the other side, applaud his insight that no adequate education can neglect the aesthetic component, and his consequent concern to provide a matrix of beauty within which the human soul can grow toward its perfection. We are willing to accept a limited censorship, if kept within the bounds of the school; a modern democratic educator might wish to admit

¹³¹ *The New Belief in the Common Man* by Karl J. Friedrich, Little, Brown, Boston, 1943, pp. 157, 177 f.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 281-283. This "molding" of the young is the *plattain* of the *Republic*, and the principle is basic also to the primary education of the citizens of Plato's *Laws*. The Oxford scholar, Dodds, in his recent article ("Why Greek Rationalism Failed," 1952), in summary agreement with his book (*The Greeks and the Irrational*, 1951, pp. 207-224, esp. p. 219; and pp. 254-255), sees

in Plato and, after him, in Aristotle, the first "serious attempt at a rational interpretation of the irrational," and the beginnings of an educational theory which would embody the new insight; he insists on the necessity, if Reason is to survive in our own day, of employing their method of social control by what Aristotle called "*ethismos*" — habituation.

¹³³ William H. Kilpatrick, in *Educational Theory*, I, May 1931. The quotations are from pp. 3-5, and 8.

only such art as appeared to him at once excellent in itself and morally above reproach, trailing no associations of irreligion or vice and calculated to arouse generous enthusiasms such as he could wish his pupils to make living parts of themselves. Even in the wider area of civic affairs, though with no thought of restriction, we could follow Plato (here the good Athenian) in wishing to accept the communal responsibility of ministering in some fashion to the sense of beauty, if only to offset the ugliness to which many of our citizens are condemned in their daily environment, and in believing, with him, that art must not be left without attachment to the common life.¹³⁴ And finally, it must be said that whatever Plato's fault in these matters may be, his sins were those of the Puritan moralist and not those of the modern totalitarian using art to prove and preach racial superiority or to excite enthusiasm for some political proposal.

We return briefly to the grim theme of Plato's condemnation of religious heretics in the *Laws*; he provides, as we recollect, that an honest and upright disbeliever shall be imprisoned for five years in the prison adjoining the meeting place of the Night Council, and shall be invited to participate in their studies and investigations, but if at the end of that time he remains unconvinced, he shall die.¹³⁵ This is perhaps Plato's most unwelcome proposal, and one which, as we have said, we trust that he would not have carried out. Plato falls below the liberality of Athenian practice in his unremitting intention to cleanse his city of all atheism, even when only privately expressed. Yet it was not wholly un-Athenian to persecute an atheist, nor is Plato's law as narrow in what it forbids as the Athenian law. To say with Grote that "the Socrates of the Platonic *Apology*" would not "be allowed to exist" by Plato in his *Republic*, or in the city of the *Laws*, is to overlook a distinction: Athens condemned those who dishonored the "gods worshipped by the city"; Plato, true to his conception of Socrates' own faith, asks only a belief in gods (or god) who are providential and incorruptibly just.¹³⁶ The mildness of these

¹³⁴ Plato's name has often been linked with that of Tolstoi in this context. As is well known, Tolstoi after his conversion repudiated all art as valueless or worse which did not possess the power of "infecting" mankind with approvable sentiments. Un-Platonic are the quality of the sentiment Tolstoi's art would convey and his standard of "peasant appeal." The resemblance lies in the conviction shared by the two men that the moral or human ministry of art is sovereign over all considerations of "pleasure" or "freedom of the artist." And there is the further parallel that both men, each in his own way, were prepared to make sacrifice of their own interests, Plato, as Crossman (p. 90) has put it (with some exaggeration,

in my judgment), in devotion "to the cause of philosophy and of the regeneration of Greece," allowing "the springs of his imagination to dry up," and Tolstoi disavowing the masterly achievements for which the world called him great.

¹³⁵ We have discussed this matter above, pp. 355-358 and 479.

¹³⁶ Grote, *Plato*, III, pp. 240, 411. To embroider the theme of our divergence from Grote, let us imagine the young Socrates enrolled among the colonists in the city of the *Laws*; what must Plato have supposed would be his probable career? He would see him commending himself to all by his moral seriousness and high intelligence. At the age of 35 he is co-opted

minimum credal requirements, which represent almost the least supposed necessary by any European society until well after the Reformation, is underscored by Plato's hope of winning over the disbeliever by a five-years' course in natural theology. In the light of history we plainly see the folly of such trust in what, to him, was simply rational persuasion; yet it has a nobly Socratic aspect. These admirable elements in Plato's law lend tragedy to the spectacle of a high and serious intent brought to naught by a misplaced coercion.

One further area of restrictiveness and we have done. In the *Laws*, as we have noted, Plato is determined to insure that law shall be supreme.¹³⁷ Every citizen is to regard the law with the utmost reverence, as a thing to be, in all but the rarest instances, preserved unchanged and followed to the letter. Even the highest officers in the state are to be the servants of the law, nay rather its slaves. Every official is to be held to the strictest possible accountability; any citizen may hale him into court if he appears guilty of injustice. In this Plato is following the precedent of his native Athens, but he has greatly extended its scope. Restriction could go no further: no one shall escape it. — Yes, but does it not have another face, and, so regarded, appear also as one of the foundations of liberty under law? Plato's earnest intention of protecting the ordinary citizens in the Republic against depredation by their rulers reappears, when once the hope of ideal rulers is discarded, in a form which we as democrats can wholeheartedly accept and honor — a far cry indeed from the totalitarian substitution of administrative discretion for legal rule.¹³⁸

Violence and inhumanity. — That Plato repudiated revolutionary violence as a means of bringing about his political reforms was evidenced at

as a junior member of the Night Council, at 50 elected Law-warden and chosen Commissioner of Education, in his latter years installed as Examiner, and after the completion of this *cursus honorum* honored with public burial. In short, the community would have shown him as warm a welcome as would the Republic, where he would of course have been one of those children of artisan parents enrolled among the guardians, and destined to be "king." In the city of the *Laws* he would have excited no suspicion by encouraging the citizens to care above all else for their souls, or by declaring that the gods cannot be at strife with one another; he would have had no need to go about convicting the citizens of ignorance in order to refute their complacent worldliness. And to consider an extreme unlikelihood, had some literalist in religion charged him with dishonoring the city's

gods, he would have enjoyed the protection of the carefully guarded judicial system, from which just those dangers of deceptive rhetoric, disorder, appeal to prejudice, and hasty disposition of cases of which Plato complained in the *Apology* had been sedulously excluded, and he would have been triumphantly acquitted. Plato could, in short, well feel that in the *Laws* he had designed a community preeminently safe for Socrates.

¹³⁷ We speak of the city of the *Laws* before its basic institutions are abrogated by the turning over to the Night Council of absolute power; cf. n. 33, p. 517.

¹³⁸ We acknowledge with pleasure our indebtedness to the article, "Plato and the Rule of Law" by Glenn R. Morrow (*Philosophical Review*, vol. I, March 1911), in which Morrow has discerningly celebrated Plato's great achievement in this field.

some length in an earlier chapter and need not be further argued here. We have likewise given our reasons for regarding as calumny the charge that violence, open or disguised, was the means whereby Plato proposed to coerce the ordinary citizens of the Republic into subservience to their exploiting masters.¹³⁹

Our discussion dealt also with a distinct but related question: did Plato advocate under legal sanctions more drastic repression of offenses against social order than the humane conscience of the Athens of his day would allow? We were brought to the unwelcome conclusion that in relation to some of these offenses, notably those committed by slaves against the persons of freemen, and in some degree also those of kinsmen against kinsmen, Plato's legislation was excessively severe. In other respects the measure of his humanity is equal to that of his time and place, or stands above it.¹⁴⁰ Plato's failings here are balanced by his recognition of the moral unity of mankind, a principle which was destined to play its part in transforming the spiritual values of the ancient world, and eventually to contribute substantially to the development, in modern times, of the full-fledged concept of human freedom, incompatible with slavery in any form.¹⁴¹

"Autarky."—Popper has found and disapproved in Plato's political theory the attempt to achieve "autarky," i.e., as Popper defines it, self-sufficiency or independence of trade; something called by the same name, one remembers, was a notable element in Hitler's program for the Third Reich. The actual element in Plato's thought which Popper is thus bringing to our attention is expressed in those passages in the *Laws* where foreign trade is frowned upon and restricted. Thus the Athenian Stranger congratulates himself (704 D-705 B) upon the circumstance that the territory to be settled, while producing most of the necessities of life, produces them in no great abundance, so that few imports will be needed and few exports will be possible; in consequence, the city will not be flooded with wealth, that enemy of perfect virtue. Again, only necessary imports, chiefly those required for military purposes, are to be permitted (847 B-D) and these are to be handled by the appropriate officials; private citizens are to be interdicted from all commercial pursuits (919 C f.). That the same trade policy was to be followed by the philosopher kings of the *Republic* Popper has apparently inferred, in the absence of any specific statement, from Plato's refusal there, also, to permit the city to grow rich and the guardians to engage in money making of any kind. Without any supporting text, Popper lists autarky as one of the totalitarian features of the ideal city.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ See pp. 344ff. and n. 70, p. 426.

¹⁴⁰ See pp. 186ff., especially n. 124, p. 192; and pp. 350-352.

¹⁴¹ The third section of Chapter 6, pp. 201-232, is our documentation here.

¹⁴² Popper, p. 87.

But how is all this related to the program of the modern dictators? Popper has given a very remarkable answer to this question. He sees Spartan foreign policy, as we earlier mentioned, as dominated in all respects by the purpose of "closing" the society, and lists among its aims, along with censorship, exclusion, opposition to all liberal ideals, racial pride, and limitation of population, this aim of "autarky"; he further specifies that the Spartan military aim was restricted to the domination and enslavement of neighboring states, as contrasted with the wider and more "universalistic" ambitions of Athens.¹⁴³ The narrow Spartan aims taken together, Popper declares, are truly totalitarian, and are in reality those of the modern totalitarians as well. The expansiveness and ambition to conquer the world of these latter are not properly totalitarian traits, but have been "imposed upon them, as it were, against their will" by the need, common to all tyrannies, of uniting their people in a shared enmity, and by the fact that in the modern world, all states are now neighbors. It is thus possible for Popper to declare that Plato, in decrying foreign trade, is showing his truly totalitarian color, while in their reluctant striving after conquest Hitler, poor man, and his fellow-sufferer Il Duce, were atypical!

In the face of such an extravagance we may remind ourselves, first, that Hitler's concept of the Master Race, like Il Duce's imperial ideal, was inherently dynamic and expansive, hardly to be permanently satisfied by the domination of his own people and of a few peripheral satellites. Secondly, it is to be observed that the actual content of the Nazi idea of "autarky" has hardly more than a nominal resemblance to the idea we find in Plato. Hitler's policy of "autarky" was indeed aimed at the self-sufficiency of Germany, her independence of international trade, in the sense that she would have under her control all sources of vital raw materials. But this was, during the entire period of the Nazi supremacy, an interim aim, designed to prepare Germany for successfully waging a long war of conquest.¹⁴⁴ A stable and permanent

¹⁴³ Popper, pp. 177-178. We have discussed this list of Spartan aims on pp. 311, and 322-323. Popper has also in this passage shifted again the meaning of "tyranny," which, as we have noted above (n. 115, p. 78), he sometimes describes as a governmental form based on popular support, thus bringing discredit upon Plato's admitted hatred of tyranny, and sometimes makes identical with the reactionary despotism of Critias. In this instance, he applies the term "tyranny" to the modern totalitarian states, and correctly sees in these an essential kinship with the Greek type which Plato opposed; for, as he says, they are vitiated by that same constant need of stirring up foreign wars which Plato had observed and condemned in Greek tyranny. In short, we

have here Popper's admission that Plato could never have approved the militarism of the modern totalitarians. And we may add, neither could he have approved the constant stirring up of wars against closely neighboring states, such as Popper supposes Plato approved in Sparta.

¹⁴⁴ I am aware that a supposedly stable self-sufficiency within a limited national territory had been proposed as a goal for Germany by several German theorists, notably Fichte, though in his formulation it was not likely to have conduced to peace. But the Nazis had no such limited objective, even in theory. Cf. *Behemoth*, by Franz Neumann, Oxford University Press, New York, 1942, pp. 329-330.

self-sufficiency can be said to have been the Nazi aim only in the sense that their ultimate goal was world domination. Plato's aim, however, was neither preparation for conquest nor the securing of independence, in the Nazi sense of that word, of foreign trade. He was proposing defense only, the securing from aggression either of his own state or of a neighbor, and the only imports he countenances and expects to continue in being are just those which Hitler most earnestly wishes to render unnecessary. Popper's choice of the word "independence" has obscured these vital differences from our view.

A further serious protest must be entered against the unsound "essentialism" inherent in Popper's conception of the foreign policy which he declares to be really totalitarian. Having identified this entity, exemplified to perfection in Sparta, he then detects it on the one hand appearing with particular clarity in Plato, and on the other hand, disguised but still recognizable in Hitlerism. Yet, as we have already shown, there is no such complete coincidence between Plato and the Spartan policy; in respect to most of the items on Popper's list, either Popper has filled in the gaps in his knowledge of Sparta by borrowing from Plato's Republic, or he has distorted Plato's meaning into a semblance of Spartanism where little or none exists.¹⁴⁵ Genuine similarity in the terms of his list is limited almost entirely to joint approval of exclusion and censorship, and even here there is no identity. In "autarky," Popper has found another near identity between Plato and Sparta. Yet this trait, as we have just shown, is not truly Hitlerian, and therefore fails to strengthen his triangular comparison.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ See n. 170, p. 311, n. 104, p. 541, and our section on Sparta and Plato's political ideals, pp. 509ff.

¹⁴⁶ I do not for one moment question Popper's title to exercise the right of what was earlier (p. 417) called the "reessentialization" of concepts. But the claimant of this privilege must observe certain minimal logical proprieties. It is clearly wrong to "reessentialize" the same concept in two contradictory ways, as Popper has done. It will be recollected that he has earlier asked us (Popper, pp. 12-13) to condemn totalitarianism as "historicist," and to see the modern totalitarisms of Nazism, Fascism, and Communism as based on a belief in a master race or favored nation or class, predestined to "inherit the earth"; this implies a "foreign policy" which is expansionist, to say the least. But in the passage that has just been claiming attention in our text, Popper has made clear his conviction that the essential aim of totalitarianism is to maintain unaltered a "closed," tribalistic

community behind a wall of cultural exclusiveness and isolation. This second assertion, as we have remarked in our text, p. 563, requires Popper to dismiss the expansiveness of the latter-day totalitarisms as a mere circumstantial accident that forms no part of the policy of totalitarianism as such.

The second condition that must be met by anyone wishing to make material application of his reessentialized concept is responsibility to the actual facts and a certain gentle docility in handling them. He must not push and pull and otherwise play Procrustes, as we have found Popper doing, in his effort to fit Sparta and Plato and Hitler into the same framework.

To conclude: in his handling of totalitarianism, Popper has paralleled his own treatment of historicism and of Athenian oligarchy (cf. pp. 506, 274ff., 606-608). In all three cases we have found him proving to us by example the dangers of that "methodological essentialism" against which he has entered so emphatic a warning (pp.

Efficiency. — A word is needed here in reply to Fite's disparaging discovery that the hierarchical principle on which Plato has organized his Republic is chosen solely with a view to "technological efficiency," which, it is implied, was to Plato an end in itself. (It is amusing to see Fite following this interpretation to the wilful extreme of declaring that the hierarchical order of the eternal forms, also, was but a "projection upon the sky of technological efficiency." ¹⁴⁷) And there is in Fite's charge also a further implication: by insisting that each shall mind his own business and by treating each person merely as a social function personified, Plato has shown callous disregard of other values which a less rigid system might have conserved. We answer that scant justice is done to Plato's *Republic* by anyone who permits himself to lose sight of its central aim, that of socializing the Socratic world of values. These values at once illuminated and limited Plato's vision; we may agree with Fite that much of great human worth was undreamed of in his philosophy. But we have no right to think of Plato as complacently accepting whatever means will lead to his chosen ends. The "efficiency" of the Republic is not technological, but internal and moral, and Plato's conscious sacrifice of other values, e.g., of Homer, was not prompted by technological considerations of promptitude and convenience in the carrying-out of some external purpose. The opposition of means to ends, in fact, is all but abolished in a philosophy for which living according to virtue is at once the means to the happiness of the entire community and simultaneously its final goal.

Militarism. — And now at last we must make a formal and emphatic re-statement, with the addition of some further evidence, of what we have repeatedly asserted in our defense of Plato from indiscriminate attack: Plato was not a militarist, but one of the earliest advocates of the moral superiority of peace to war. We need not repeat what we have so recently written of Plato's attitude to war as expressed in the *Laws*, particularly the explicit rebuke administered to the Spartan polity for its central commitment to the attainment of courage and victory in war. Plato's testimony here is so unambiguous that it can be discredited only by the method, usual with Popper, of assuming that Plato has said one thing with his lips and hidden another in his heart: "many militarists have talked peace and practiced war." ¹⁴⁸ Our general demonstration that Plato tells his reader the truth may here be supplemented by the remark that had Plato really desired to plan a state which should aim primarily at

34-35, 485, 624). In each case, he has set up a description or list of traits and has invested it in practice with an authority which dissolves distinctions and overrides palpable facts, much in the manner of a social stereotype which blinds its employer to observable traits and sharpens to Lyncean acuity his perception of what isn't

warlike achievement, he might have said so without incurring public blame. For had not Pericles praised Athens as great beyond all other Greek states because of her far wider conquests, and was not Plato's contemporary Alcidas free to acclaim without reservation the great Theban general Epaminondas?¹⁴⁹

The *Republic*, however, requires a somewhat different handling. For we are confronted here, in addition to Popper and Neurath, by Fite, whom reading of the *Republic* has convinced that it is militarist in spirit. Unfortunately the *Republic* contains no such explicit denials as are found in the *Laws*, but it is possible to collect from scattered passages and from some general considerations sufficient evidence that no contradiction divides the earlier from the later Plato.

Anyone who does as Neurath has advised and makes an effort to pay no attention to Plato's lofty protestations of aim, but to look instead at what Plato recommends shall be done in his ideal city, will observe, without doubt, that Plato makes it his first task to recommend the provision of a corps of fearless, loyal, "athletes of war," and that he devotes much space to describing their training and education, which has as one of its basic objectives (Neurath would perhaps say its only objective) the production of effective fighting men and women. But despite the initial prominence of these soldiers, the fair-minded reader will note that in due course they are required to yield the primacy to the philosopher kings, who, though they too have received a military training, possess qualities extending into what is almost another dimension of human excellence. And it is they, we learn (*Rep.* 412 A-B, 497 C-D, 546 D-E), who are to direct the training of the soldiers which has already been described; only thus can that right education be maintained which alone can prevent the degeneration of the ideal state into Spartan militarism, which will still be able to win wars but will lose its essential allegiance to the highest values and its quality of justice to the common citizens. Though the Platonic soldiers are necessary to the continued existence of the ideal state, the philosopher rulers are, in turn, necessary to secure their distinctively Platonic character. In other words, practical assignment of tasks proves that the city of the *Republic* is not a war-machine.

Some particular passages will reinforce this conclusion. That war is for Plato in the *Republic* not a good *per se* is clear from the ignoble origin he assigns it. It will be remembered that on his way toward the founding of his own city, Plato drew a picture of a quasi-primitive community, living in a state of simplicity and innocence, in which war was unknown. It is only when, no longer satisfied with true and healthful pleasures, this city becomes inflamed with inordinate desires and requires more territory for their satisfaction that neighbor-city encroaches upon neighbor, and war begins.¹⁵⁰ Just as in the

¹⁴⁹ See our p. 143.

¹⁵⁰ We have summarized this section of

the *Republic* more fully on pp. 168-169 above.

Phaedo (66 C), "the acquisition of commodities" which our "slavery to the attendance of the body" brings upon us, is the source "of all wars," so here in the *Republic*, war is born of an ignoble greed and covetousness, "things from which the greatest disasters, public and private, come to states"—surely a discouraging preface to a book supposedly dedicated to the greater glory of war. It is hardly necessary to point out that a man holding this view may still without inconsistency accord an honorable position to those trained for the vigorous defense of the homeland. Inconsistency would appear if, after thus condemning the appetitive satisfactions as the cause of war, Plato had held them up none the less before his citizens as worthy objects of pursuit. But the denial of the acquisitive ideal was the very foundation of his ethical scheme.

Is Plato's state to expand by conquest at the expense of other states? This question is answered in the confident affirmative by Fite, adducing the very passage we just now mentioned, in which the luxurious city seeks to cut off a portion of its neighbor's land—strange evidence, when one considers that at the time of this offense, Plato's own city was still unborn. Neurath thinks that "the barbarians" will be the standing target of Platonic aggression; for this he has only the evidence met by our argument in an earlier passage.¹⁵¹ How has Popper voted on this issue? At first it might appear that he has abstained, but a second look reveals that he has voted, "Yes, but only to a limited degree." A third look tells us why: it is, we saw, a part of the totalitarian pattern, as Popper has chosen to interpret it, to prefer control to conquest; after "enslaving" her immediate neighbors, Popper apparently supposes that Plato's city, like Sparta, would wish to remain at rest within the security of her own tribal enclosure.

In this notion Popper and the facts of the case are, we should judge, in accord to the extent of almost one-third. There is, to the best of our reading, only one passage in the *Republic* which leaves open the possibility that Plato contemplated under any conditions the enlargement of the territory of his city. At *Republic* 423 B, the question is raised "of the proper size of the city and of the territory which they" (the guardians) "should mark off for a city of that size and seek no more," and the answer given is that it shall be let grow "so long as in its growth it consents to remain a unity, but no further"; it is added that the guardians must "keep guard in every way that the city shall not be too small . . . but that it shall be a sufficient city and one." Nothing is said in this place of the means by which these ends may be achieved. One further passage must be taken into account: after explaining how the "marriages" of the guardians are to be arranged, Plato enjoins upon the rulers the duty of planning these in such a way "that they may keep the numbers of the citizens as nearly as may be the same, taking into account wars and diseases and all

¹⁵¹ For Neurath's opinion, see p. 411; for our discussion of the barbarian question as raised in the *Republic*, see pp. 223ff.

such considerations, and that, so far as possible, our city may not grow too great or too small." 152

From the first of these passages, in the absence of further context, it is only possible to say that Plato seems to be contemplating a time in the life of the city when expansion into neighboring territory might be undertaken, but whether by conquest or by peaceful incorporation of neighboring villages (synoecism), cannot be said. Athens, it will be recollected, had expanded by both methods in her earlier time. Solon's conquest of Salamis would have been a possible precedent in the mind of his kinsman Plato, and if such was the case, then plainly Plato was contemplating conquest and should be prosecuted — but he must have the privilege of trial in an Attic court. The more peaceful method of synoecism just mentioned could also have been in his mind.

In any case there was to be a limit to what was permitted in this matter: Plato in the very passage in which he is supposed by his critics to be recommending war on the barbarians, forbids his city to enslave Greek cities or fellow Greeks; those who, like Popper, habitually see in Plato the intention to emulate Sparta, should observe this prohibition. And as we saw above, when the city had grown to its optimum and very limited size, expansion was to be brought to a stop, which recalls, by the psychological association of opposites, the practice of the modern dictators. To the extent to which Plato's intention of limiting his city's expansion resembles the nonexpansionist policy of Sparta after it had conquered Messenia, Popper is right; but since Plato's nonguardian citizens are not to be Helots, and his guardians are not to be, in Spartan fashion, enslaved to the custody of their own slaves, the similarity ends abruptly. The motive of Plato's limitation is neither the enslavement of neighboring states nor the holding down of human cattle, but the furtherance of his own pacific ideal.

Plato has also offered us a glimpse into what might be called the "foreign policy" of his state; the philosopher will show that he too is a realistic statesman by providing a mildly Machiavellian policy for defense, as an offset to the city's relative inferiority in wealth and fighting strength (*Republic* 422 A-423 B). If need of allies against threatened attack should arise, our city can easily procure them, either among neighboring cities or among the factions within the attacking city itself, by promising to them in compensation for their services all the spoils of victory. Sweet are the uses of austerity! Now it is difficult to see anything deeply criminal in this. Policies of this general nature were pursued, as the reader of Thucydides well knows, both by Athens and by Sparta. In the historical circumstances of Plato's day, the only method available to a small state of preserving its independent existence would have been

¹⁵² *Republic* 460 A. Both passages in this paragraph are taken from Shorey's trans., Loeb Library.

some such expedient as Plato has suggested, and suggested, be it observed, not in the interests of expansion, but solely to ward off aggression.

As final evidence in the *Republic*, we may remind the reader¹⁵³ that when Plato comes to describe timocracy, and sets it in contrast to the ideal city, of which it is the first stage of corruption, he puts in a conspicuous place, second only to its enslavement of the common people, the greater honor it bestows upon soldiers and the pursuits of war; it is not that the timocrats will be more adept in the art of war, but that, unlike the guardians of the ideal city, they will be "better suited for war than for peace," and will honor "the stratagems and contrivances of war" and "occupy themselves with war most of the time." Such statements are in themselves demonstrative indications that in Plato's state, neither oppression nor war will be the chief business of its guardians' lives.

It would not be difficult to show this same outlook from a reference to other dialogues, both earlier than the *Republic* and intermediate between the latter and the *Laws*. In the latter group, the *Politicus* alone need concern us. There, in compensation for the lost idyllic peacefulness of the age of Cronos, Plato offers us (307 E-308 A) as a theoretically attainable ideal a community of citizens in whom the balanced temperament prevails. By properly arranged marriages joining those of opposite types he would create individuals in whom the spirited element will provide a manly energy adequate to preserve the state from enslavement by her enemies, while the orderly constituent will prevent madcap militarism from endangering its welfare in the opposite fashion. Now all this is clearly little more than an elaboration of one of the principles underlying the choice and training of the junior guardians in the *Republic*, and war is being given recognition only as a means of preserving freedom, not of enlarging power.

From the dialogues commonly regarded as prior to the *Republic* we will choose the *Symposium*, and here we shall also include the *Phaedrus*,¹⁵⁴ dialogues which, though they are not predominately political in character, will serve to confirm those revelations of Plato's basic value schedule found in the *Republic*, rightly read. In both dialogues Plato has clearly indicated his conception of the highest goals of human life, and the direction in which they are to be pursued, while giving us at least some scattered indications of human goods of lesser rank. It would be superfluous in this place to repeat the substance of our earlier exposition of the speech of Diotima and the myth of the charioteer. These are among the great symbols of ethics and religion; the warfare to which they are relevant is that of the spirit, not the field of battle. They move in a direction contrary to the greeds and materialities for which,

¹⁵³ We deal with this same passage, *Rep* 547 B ff., on pp. 510-511.

¹⁵⁴ For a discussion of the date of composition of the *Phaedrus*, see n. 43, p. 96

as Plato has told us, wars are fought, and culminate in that vision of the central good and beauty which is attained, at the pinnacle of their highest education, by the philosopher kings of the *Republic*. Indeed, it is by keeping centrally before our minds the conception of an experience on this transcendental level that we are best able to realize what it was that Plato believed was infused into his city, to endow it with a quality not to be confused with either the wisdom or the power of a merely wordly state. We touch here the springs of Plato's cosmical religion.

Mention was earlier made of certain lesser goals indicated in these dialogues and relevant to our theme of war. Diotima in the *Symposium* sets on the highest level of those who are fired with noble passion, only the philosopher, and on the second level mentions the poets Homer and Hesiod, and the great legislators, Lycurgus and Solon; but among this honorable company no warrior appears. In the *Phaedrus* (248 D-E), we are offered a graduated scale of lives, listing in order the goals and occupations of those who have enjoyed with different degrees of clarity before their birth the beatific vision of the eternal Forms. At the top of the list, again, stand the philosopher and the lover of the Muses; only on the step below do we find the "lawful king or warlike ruler." Of the two pairs of lovers whom we later meet (256 A-C), the higher and the lower are, respectively, the lovers of wisdom and the seekers after honor. It is plain that we have been hearing the report of an uncommonly well organized and unified mind that everywhere preserves the firm distinction between the secondary values supplied by the warrior and the primary intrinsic excellence of philosophic wisdom.

The Verdict

Here concludes our long task of examining all the traits of totalitarianism that the several detractors have imputed to Plato and of assessing the degree of his guilt under each head. We are now ready to gather together the threads and reply to each of the detractors in turn.

To Crossman, it is plain what terms of settlement we are able to offer. We are ready to agree that Plato believed most of mankind — not merely the working people, be it noted, but all except the "golden natures" — incapable of living virtuous lives unless aided either by ideal rulers or by good laws, planned by a moral expert. But we have shown that it cannot be concluded from this that Plato sanctioned, as the second-best form of government, states headed by second-best dictators. We agree, also, that Plato approved the employment of "propaganda," but we ask that it be observed that this did not mean in general the inculcation of basic falsehood, but the mythical presentation of truth; in particular, moral values were not to be falsified or distorted. We have cleared Plato of "racialism" in the sense of an intention to make membership in the ruling group a hereditary privilege. Finally we have shown the injustice of imputing to him readiness to approve cruel and unjust state

policies and propaganda devices. If these distinctions between Plato and the Fascists and Communists could be added to the vital difference in aim which Crossman recognizes, we believe Crossman would himself agree to set Plato and the modern totalitarians far apart.

It involves an unfortunate and unintended distortion of Fite's purpose in his book, to disengage from it the two points of correspondence he has mentioned between Russian Communism and Plato's thought, as if they represented the outcome of an effort on Fite's part to draw a systematic comparison. The first of these points, the authoritative imposition of opinion, we found reason to accept under the limitation that those who are to do the imposing in Plato's state are *sui generis*. The adulation of technological efficiency we have denied. Those other constituents of Plato's political program which we added on our own responsibility to Fite's list of parallels, we have shown to be either absent, or present (as the case of Spartanism) only in mild degree.

A final settlement with Popper will be more complicated. It will be remembered that in our effort to deal fairly with his conception of totalitarianism, we disposed the elements he detects in it under ten headings. Under five of these we have found cause in each case to accept a portion of the charge. Thus, first and foremost, we have agreed that Plato was proposing, in Popper's terms, to "close" his society, in so far as this denotes regimentation of the ordinary citizens; in meeting this charge, we have done little more than to enter the extenuation that what was to be thus enclosed was conceived by Plato to be something of the highest intrinsic excellence, and not the frozen image of a fancied past, valued only for stability and for the release from strain that it would confer upon its members. We have also admitted that Plato's state, by depriving most of its citizens of independent moral action and freedom of belief, would in fact harm and diminish them as human beings. We have agreed, too, that Plato would put an elite in control of his Republic, that he is entirely too harsh in the punishments imposed upon offending slaves in the *Laws*, and that, selectively, he admires Sparta, approving in particular its endeavor to attain at least a part of virtue.

Under these same headings, however, we have shown that Plato sponsored and encouraged freedom of inquiry for the philosopher kings of the Republic, and for their nearest equivalents in the city of the *Laws*, and that he contemplated change in the direction of improvement in both communities; that he never limited the criterion of morality to state interest or upheld the amoral state, and that he intended the benefit of every citizen; that he despised the oppression practised by the Spartans, the narrowness of their ideal, and the brutalizing effect of their education; that his elite was to be unified by no haughty scorn of its human cattle, his philosopher kings to be no breeder-shamans; that most of his particular inhumanities were shared with him by other enlightened Greeks of his day, while his own humanity vastly exceeded theirs in depth and in ideality of aim.

Under the five remaining headings we were able to enter unqualified de-

nials. Plato was no historicist of any kind, no racialist — he felt indeed greater piety for those of kindred blood, but of racial scorn he was entirely free. He was scrupulous in disavowing violence, was in no modern sense an advocate of autarky, and was far rather a peace-lover than a militarist.

One wonders, in view of all these denials, whether Popper himself, if he should accept our verdicts on the several particular parts of his indictment, would continue to call Plato a totalitarian. Certainly he would have to withdraw his rebuke to Crossman and Field for supposing Plato to be morally superior to the moderns of that stripe.¹⁵⁵ Tested by most of Popper's own central criteria, Plato escapes the charge: the denial of political or tribal immorality destroys close kinship with either Nazism or Fascism, the denial of racialism would seem to rule out any identity with Nazism, the removal of historicism must entail a serious loss of similarity to Communism. That Plato should be no advocate of revolutionary violence and no would-be oppressor of the common citizen, and that he should be contemplating no conquest and enslavement even of neighboring states would further reduce the parallel. The degree of his inhumanity and admiration for Sparta might be deemed insufficient to carry much weight. There is left standing in Popper's case hardly more than enough to justify his comparison of Platonism with the authoritarian Christianity of the Middle Ages. And here we may leave him, agreeing that both faiths were inspired with moral certainty and that both adopted or proposed the adoption of deplorable means of securing their universal acceptance by those subject to their sway; protesting only that at the heart of each there was a store of value, for the sake of which we can be glad that such a whole existed.

Our promise of measuring Plato's political theory by the criteria of totalitarianism as formulated by our three nonpartisan experts can be quickly kept. We have cleared Plato of Brinton's "nationalism" and "racial superiority"; the third trait, subordination to a ruler and his elite, we showed as having only a qualified correspondence to the Platonic ideal; only the "strict discipline" of the people remains. McGovern's two defining traits are both, at first view, points of agreement: the first, "a strong, forceful government," survives a second look as a genuine agreement; but "etatism," in the light of our account of "political holism," turns out to be only a partial parallel; Plato, despite his commendation of control and censorship, was no worshipper of the state, but an advocate of the subordination of political instrumentalities to moral and educational ends in the service of individuals.

Of Perry's list the last three entries were revealed as sharply un-Platonic. Especially noteworthy is the contrast between "anti-intellectualism" and the Platonic pledge, a recurring motif through the dialogues, to follow the argument wheresoever it leads. Perry's surviving trait, "uniformitarianism," turned out to be in harmony with the spirit of Plato's reforms, though we saw that

¹⁵⁵ Popper, pp. 87-88.

the uniformity that Plato was seeking was (as on Perry's specifications it has a logical right to be) a rational and universal standard. It seems, then, that no one of the three descriptions can accommodate Plato without serious injury to itself or to him.

We are brought back to a position not far from our point of departure. Plato's political ideal can be classified without distortion as a very highly differentiated one among the many varieties of authoritarian governments denoted by our generalized version of Webster's definition of totalitarianism; it can also, as we earlier agreed, be called "totalitarian" in Sabine's carefully guarded sense of a government which "obliterates the distinction between areas of private judgment and of public control." The repute of Plato as a political thinker for our time will, we submit, be dependent upon two chief considerations: (1) whether or not we take careful note of the safeguards and qualifications which Plato has, both in the *Republic* and in the *Laws*, interposed between those who are to exercise rule, and their inherent human capacity to deteriorate into the likeness of what we have in mind when the word "dictator" is set before us, and (2) whether we permit ourselves to recoil so violently from the Platonic ideal of a community controlled by a single criterion of social good, however excellent, which claims sovereignty at all points and over all individual and minority opinion, that we have no eyes left to see the perennially valid components of his thought.

Living Elements in Plato's Political Thought

We are, then, brought to ask the important question: assuming that in the warfare just ended we have repelled the fury of those who have assailed Plato as the friend of the modern enemies of our most cherished political freedoms, how much is still left standing of the noble old Platonic city through whose streets we fought?¹⁴ We have seen that the city is no longer, without considerable remodeling, conceivable as a habitation for the good society of our time. But, one may believe, a city that has served so many generations as a place of refuge and an ideal, requiring, to be sure, some adaptation in consideration of their respective needs, may well deserve one more attempted salvaging, and it behooves us, accordingly, to ask by what alterations it might be made serviceable for present use.

In setting out on this inquiry there is one principle that must be kept in constant view. Plato, for all his concern with the political conditions of human life, was still, on our view, primarily a philosopher, and his *Republic* is not

¹⁴ In undertaking to remove the outmoded historical accidents from the perennially valuable essence of Plato's thought I invoke the inspiration and authority of Professor Ducasse, who has admirably revealed the lasting value of Aristotle's con-

cept of "liberal education" (*Philosophy in American Education* 1915 pp. 129-136), and the late Theodore Spencer who has rendered a like service to Montaigne in his brilliant and charming imaginary dialogue "Montaigne in America" 1914.

so much the plan of a city as it is a dramatically disguised essay on the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, in which is set forth its author's central convictions regarding the meaning of the world and man, the highest springs of value, and the way leading toward the vision of the eternal Good. And this is, for us aftercomers, the devotees of philosophy, the aspect of the *Republic* that far outshines all others, and which we should never permit to be made secondary to the particularities of political reform. We possess genuine rights in this matter, valid against the claims of the detractors, the specialists in the domains of history, philology, and comparative government, valid, one may even say, against Plato himself. For we lovers of philosophy are the chief heirs and administrators of his estate, a legacy which we are free to make use of as we responsibly see fit.

And along with our rights go duties: the correction of his lapses in the light of his insights, the removal from his system of all that was local and valid only for his own time and place, and even the infusion into his thought-stream of ideas and principles unknown to him and his age, but consonant with the spirit of his philosophy and prerequisite for its acceptability in the present age.

But, it may be objected, by what right are you justified in "infusing" principles unknown to Plato into his system, erasing his errors, and generally improving upon the deity you profess to worship? Our answer may be drawn from the history of religion, with which the history of some philosophical systems exhibits a striking parallel. The pattern is a familiar one. After an initial fervor of discipleship in which the word of the master is the complete and unquestioned truth, there arises first the recognition of incompleteness: the founder did not express his view on this or that issue that has now assumed an importance it did not possess in his day. It becomes necessary to extend his doctrine by discovering what he would have said had the question confronted him. And slowly it is realized, by the more thoughtful and intellectually scrupulous, that the master has expressed two opinions not possible to be brought into complete harmony with one another. The climax will be reached when, most likely in the cross-light of other doctrines, scientific or philosophic, some exceptionally discerning spirit and commonly not the least devout, discovers what appears to him a substantial gap or outright error in the traditional articles of faith.

A familiar modern instance of this rhythm of discipleship is found in the religious experience of Albert Schweitzer.¹⁵⁷ Historical and theological inquiries had brought this deeply devout but keen and scrupulously honest mind to a cruel dilemma between the opposing demands of faith and reason. It was not simply that the supernatural element in the Gospels was no longer possible to his belief. His special difficulty lay in his discovery of what appeared a

¹⁵⁷ See his book, *Out of My Life and Thought*, Henry Holt and Co., New York, 1933.

major error in the belief of the Founder himself, namely "the naïve realism"¹⁵⁸ of his Messianic conviction that the "Time of the End" was approaching, to be signalized by a great Satanic persecution (temptation) against which Jesus directed men to pray. We cannot follow here the long struggle that brought Schweitzer to his final conclusion; it is the conclusion alone that is to our purpose. He has stated it in words that might with very little alteration be employed by a contemporary Platonist. The religion of Jesus, he declares, cannot be made "our own through the concepts in which he proclaimed it"; we "must rather translate it into those of our modern view of the world."¹⁵⁹ Of the success and fruitfulness of Schweitzer as a translator of those concepts, the familiar story of his life is sufficient witness.

Something less dramatic but still fairly comparable in effect has been performed, often indeed unconsciously, for the founder of their "faith," by the greater Platonists of various ages. Our opening pages were devoted to recalling the homage to Plato rendered by theologians, poets, and philosophers, a numerous company, stretching almost in an unbroken chain to our own times. Like Schweitzer, these men were making vital use of a spiritual guide to the perplexities of living and thinking in their respective times. But can we, in this present world that lies so problematically before us, still to any purpose summon Plato to our council chamber? Or must our honoring of him today be the mistaken crowning of one who is king only of the strengthless dead?

Were we commissioned by some philosophic archangel to survey the works of Plato with special attention to his "city," and to report back to him our decision, as Voltaire's Babouc was empowered to decide the fate of the city of Persepolis, we should not be at a loss. Like Babouc, we should find some elements that we could positively wish to destroy. First of all, we should wish to remove the stains that the existence of the institution of slavery have left in the fabric of his thought. We should revoke (as he himself went far toward doing in the *Laws*) the hard and fast distinction between rulers and ruled which in the *Republic* he has based upon a mistaken estimate of the capacity of the common man. We would have Plato disavow the tacit assumption against which his admissions of human fallibility were unable to take effect that he was in all essentials possessed of a final knowledge of moral truth. In the same breath we should demand a lifting of the censorship upon art, and abandonment of the prescription of a minimum religion. And we should not forget to smash the barriers that Plato has set between honorific activities and the degrading "banausic" arts. All these elements we should consign to oblivion, save in so far as it is a salutary lesson to be reminded of the errors and limitations under which it seems to be, as Whitehead has suggested, the fate of the highest and purest ideas to effect their entry into this world. And finally, we should wish to abolish a certain austere contempt in Plato's condemnation of

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁵⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 37.

whatever falls below the high standard he has set for all members of his community. We should recognize his reformer's right to moral indignation in the face of social wrongs, and still feel that Plato has not sufficiently balanced justice with mercy to satisfy our modern demand. It is here that his own principle of persuasion requires further extension and deepening in the light of the Christian principle of love and the recognition of the value of even the humblest individual lives.

But at this point we should wish to lay down the hammer of critical destruction and take up the harp of praise, asking that archangel to read with us a few of those grander passages¹⁰⁰ in which Plato's wings are spread and he rises to clear heights from which to survey time and existence as if from the moveless throne of the eternal truth. In such passages, Plato stirs in his reader a speechless conviction that if he has not "grasped and handled immutables," he has come within their luminous shadow; Plato has awakened in him the metaphysical faith that in some fashion which reason is pledged to make as fully intelligible as it can, existence and value are indissolubly one, and that the more we can discover of the articulation of the real, the more of ideality and value will stand revealed.

Descending from the height of such a passage and looking again at the familiar landscape of Plato's more mundane levels, are we not, like Plato's own returning inmate of the cavern, able presently to observe some things that we had not noticed before? We now see that the city we had supposed to be the dwelling-place of the philosopher kings and their wards is to the real city of which Plato is truly discoursing as the shadows on the cavern wall are to the three-dimensional bodies whose fleeting images they are. Thus not only the story of the cave but the whole *Republic* is, in some sort, a parable whose key and meaning we are directed to find, not in terms of empirical fact and material relations, but in those of an avowedly ideal philosophy.

We are justified, then, in refusing to allow the issue to be decided in terms of the particularities of Plato's state, as if Plato's claim upon the world's attention stood or fell with his choice of three classes of citizens and two approved modes of music, and his discretion in appointing the right age for marriage. What we are seeking, as material for our test of Plato's availability in our time, will not be found among these shadows but among the principles which they imperfectly represent, especially those that lie on the intermediate levels of his thought. Let us choose some representative examples, beginning with the Platonic conviction that the fundamental business of the state is the promotion of ethical values.

We do not in these United States expect that government officials shall be moral luminaries nor look to them for the guidance of our private lives. A literal translation of Plato's panethical state we would find impossible. But

¹⁰⁰ E.g., *Phaedrus* 250 B-C, *Republic* 508 A ff., *Theaetetus* 176 A ff.

when we turn away from the realism of political practice and the techniques of administration, and begin to ask questions about the ultimate goals of political action and the standards by which our success or failure as a nation can properly be judged, it is rather surprising how suddenly the gap between us and the Greek thinker is diminished. For with him, Americans are constantly asserting that good citizenship is measured in terms of service to the community, that the community itself exists not as a mere police department or a profitable stock-company, but for the promotion of the good life and the fullest possible development of the moral capacities of all its members, that a statesman is distinguished from a mere politician by the breadth of his vision and his integrity in pursuit of ends which he himself believes valid. We want neither the "power state" with its nihilistic denial of the relevance of moral criteria to its sovereign acts, nor nineteenth-century *laissez faire*, with its conscientious indifference to the welfare, apart from the basic security, of its members. Platonic in spirit, too, are those Americans who advocate subsidies for the equalizing of educational opportunity, or the use of Federal funds for slum clearance and the endowment of scientific research. In the field of international relations our self-picture is that of a nation committed to the Platonic ideal of justice over power.

A second Platonic principle enhances the value of the first by supplying a general method for correcting its errors: the submission of all issues to the adjudication of reason. This is, for Plato, no empty formalism, with reason functioning as a synonym for whatever he may happen to believe on instinct. It is a quite definite commitment to give the deciding vote in every vital election not to the hottest appetite or the strongest impulse but to that power of the soul that is capable of rising above the flux of momentary incitements to the consideration of universals, and discovering the objective structure of the moral order. Now it is true that many contemporary minds would reject as illusory the very existence of an objective structure of this sort, taken as a reality over and above the social order that sustains it. Nevertheless Plato is here proposing a method of clarification by directed inquiry, open to all men, and thus providing an intelligible basis on which men may at the worst agree to disagree. And the possibility remains that the rationality of the method may, if persistently applied, impart something of its quality to the mentalities of all who employ it, with the result that an area of agreement may be established capable of indefinite future growth. If this hope should in the long run prove unsuccessful, it may be necessary to say that not Plato, but mankind has failed.

Meanwhile, and as one of our chief sureties against dissolution, we share with Plato a further principle, famous in British political history and much in the minds of the founders of the American Constitution, which in our tradition has been known as the "division of powers," but which Plato called the "mixed" or "tempered government," and sought in his manner to embody in the city of the Laws. Again, as with the Republic, we must not confound the

letter with the spirit. Despite our many and important points of divergence from the particularities of the Platonic scheme, our acceptance of the heart of Plato's proposal makes us in this important respect Platonists all. A New England Town Meeting may well be called an echo of pure Athenian democracy, but behind and above that meeting, in the constitutional framework of our governments, in the whole body of our preponderantly traditional law, in the deliberations of our legislatures and in the sessions of our higher courts set beyond the immediate reach of the electorate, we possess a structure of diverse components, a tempering of power by power, which Plato would have viewed with fascinated delight. It is only when we forget this dimension of our political system that we are tempted to deny the debt of nurture that modern democracy owes to the reputed despiser of the democratic name.

It should not be difficult for a contemporary Platonist, pursuing strictly the principles of the *Republic* and of the *Laws*, to supply himself with as pacifistic a program as the spirit of this age will allow. He could plausibly discover the soul of Plato reincarnating itself in every whole-hearted effort to establish a peaceful international order. He will pay scant heed to the isolated utterance in the *Republic* in which a policy of war upon the non-Greek barbarians is accepted, as a preferred alternative to the war of Greeks with Greeks and with barbarians as well, and he will remember instead Plato's praise of peace and friendly feeling, so far as this could conceivably be attained. Plato's secondary and defensive "militarism" the contemporary Platonist will not, in the circumstances, dare to drop, but toward the ideal of the United Nations he will look with the same enthusiasm with which Plato looked to the coming of his philosopher kings — and for similar reasons, since the effective outlawry of war as between nations has more than a surface resemblance to the elimination of civil strife and the establishment of harmonious mutuality within a single state.

The principle, "each man active in the one work for which he is by nature fit," taken in its literal sense and applied to any complex modern society, would be either impracticable, since the assumed "one work" would scarcely be discoverable for more than the exceptionally gifted or deficient, or, if this difficulty could be supposed surmounted, would entail a dangerous extension of the existing narrow specialization or minute subdivision of labor that technology has bestowed upon us in such abundance. How then can Plato's principle be adapted to good use? Only by revising and deepening the meaning of the key words in the Platonic formula. Man, what is he, in soul and body adequately conceived? What is the proper work of man, conceived in terms of the nature that we find him to possess? We recall from the higher ranges of Plato's thought the conception of man as a "divine plant," as *au fond* a rational soul who has viewed the eternal forms and who possesses rationality as an inseparable attribute. We recall the warning against the crippling and blighting effect of certain activities; the mistaken application of this notion may now be cor-

rected, partly at least in view of Plato's own doctrine. Every man, we shall now declare, must be regarded as a being too godlike and rational to be put to servile use. Under the conditions of contemporary civilization this will demand translation into terms of hours and conditions of work, and beyond this, commitment to an ideal already far along the road to realization, the turning of scientific knowledge to the fullest possible account in devising rational and humane techniques for the replacement of old methods of performing rough and repellent tasks. With these considerations in mind, the contemporary Platonist, observing from his study window the passing of the latest model of a motorized automatic street-sweeper, might be tempted to exclaim, "There goes Platonism on four wheels!"

But what of freedom? Is that not the fruit of another tree, which it would require wizardry to graft on Plato's stock? We think not, and for this principal reason: all those moral and social values to which Plato attached the highest worth, which were, in fact, the moving energies within his state, require freedom as a necessary condition. That Plato honored free and spontaneous performance above passive obedience and control is absolutely clear. We recall his ironical depiction of those who, having lived virtuously but only from blind custom and habit, are reborn as social harmless creatures such as bees. His contrasting ideal appears in his delineation of the philosopher kings, who enjoy the fullest freedom of inquiry and self-determination. The contemporary Platonist, then, need discover no new principle of freedom to add to Plato's store. What he must do is to extend the application of Plato's insight, and here, as in all possible fields, seek to provide for the many what once was thought possible of attainment only for the few.

And here we must leave our plea for Plato and Platonism to be decided along with the fate of the Western world with whose moral destiny they have been so intimately associated. We have sought to separate, not to confuse, Platonic light and the elements of shadow with which it has latterly been identified. Against this confusion we have everywhere contended that a great tradition, embodying a noble conception of the human spirit, can never long remain subject to control by its least illuminating insights, whether these be the result, as with Inquisitorial Christianity, of a historical betrayal of the master, or as in Platonism, the consequence of a partial eclipse of vision in the master himself. The essentials of Plato's vision still stand: the prophetic image of a social brotherhood, growing up in grace and harmony and understanding, under justice, toward an ideal perfection never quite to be reached. One need not deny that this greater Plato was, on occasion, replaced by a lesser man who was guilty of confusing things temporal with things eternal, and mistaking some of his own preferences for irremovable truth. Yet, in grateful reverence for major service rendered to the spiritual advancement of mankind, and in the hope of insights yet to be derived from his creative impact upon us, we will be wiser to keep our eyes fixed on the image of the greater man.

APPENDICES
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Appendix I

Two Additional Platonic Detractors

Two rather disparate critics of Plato will share our attention here, an American professor of classics, Alban Dewes Winspear, and the widely known philosopher-historian, Arnold Toynbee.

The Genesis of Plato's Thought, by Winspear, published in 1940, appears to have been written almost entirely from the standpoint of theoretical Marxism and accordingly seeks to derive Plato's thought from the categories of class struggle between the Athenian common people and their economic enemies of the oligarchical party. Metaphysics appears as crypto-sociology, secretly directed by the hand of economic class interest; ethics loses its autonomy as rational inquiry into the structure of the good life, and sinks into the faithful handmaid of its nonmoral mistress, economics.

Professor Winspear has read, acknowledged, and turned to account Fite's book, and has reproduced much, even, of the latter's sarcastic depreciation and systematic refusal to allow Plato the benefit of any doubt. To Fite's general suspiciousness, Winspear's familiarity with the Marxist doctrine of the prevalence of "false fronts" has given a specific turn: beneath the surface of Plato's most innocent remarks, he can often discern a hidden tactic, aimed at political and economic enemies. To his Marxist suppositions, again, he is indebted for some truly astonishing opinions, far more extravagant than Fite's. Dionysius I, tyrant of Syracuse, was, we are informed, a progressive, democratic leader; Socrates was a reactionary snob. Winspear directs against Plato's political message a remarkable argument which may be summarized as follows: he maintains, first, that most of Plato's political ideals were derived from the Pythagoreans, and second, that the history of the original Pythagorean settlements in Magna Graecia and their abuse of political power in the name of aristocracy prove that Plato's ideal city, had he reduced it to practice, would have come to the same bad end; from these two premises he concludes (p. 228) that we need attach little weight

to "the idealistic aspects . . . of Plato's thinking," but may confidently reduce him to the level of an authoritarian reactionary, planning realistically to employ force, but sufficiently "subtle" (p. 248) to conceal his intention under fine phrases. Winspear here illustrates the illegitimate confusion of intentions with results against which we shall protest on other pages: it is the height of injustice to suppose that a thinker must have intended whatever the critic foresees as a probable result of the carrying out of his proposals, and then to explain his avowal of contrary aims as a mere indication of deceit. On the other hand, Winspear can find in Plato some things to admire. The reach and inclusiveness of the "synoptic vision" appeal to the admirer of the Marxist dialectic, and Plato's advocacy of self-abnegation and dedication to a cause commands the respect of one who feels himself committed to the greatest of human causes, the realization of social justice. I have not thought fit to include Professor Winspear among the necessarily small number of detractors whom I shall discuss in detail, partly because most of what is substantial in his brief is, I believe, fairly answered elsewhere in our argument, but chiefly because most of his major objections against Plato are, as we have seen, so inextricably dependent upon Marxist assumptions as to lose most of their meaning for those to whom Marxism is not, in James' phrase, a "live option."

acterized as "petulant" and "partly insincere," and taxed with "fouling his own Attic nest" (IV, p 264)¹ Strictly speaking, then, it would not be possible to say precisely how Toynbee has evaluated Plato, for neither has Toynbee. But the brief account that follows may serve at least to indicate his "majority view," and will pave the way for our exposition of the case against Plato as argued by one of the major detractors, K R Popper, who has himself acknowledged his obligation to the British historian for many traits in his picture of Plato. The most significant of Toynbee's criticisms will be considered in later sections of our text.

Toynbee thinks of Plato as of a man who can be, on occasion, cynical, reactionary, and inhumane (I, pp 247-249, and by clear implication, VI, p 246), though also immensely intelligent, highly imaginative (I, p 460), and deeply concerned for the welfare of his fellow men (VI, p 243). This man saw in the contemporary political scene essentially what Toynbee himself sees in it: the breakdown of Hellenic society arising out of its moral incapacity (IV, p 264). To escape the resulting "sense of drift" (V, pp 412, 420), and to salvage what he could of Hellenic values, Plato turned to a desperate expedient: he sought a return to the simpler and more secure stability that he associated with the past, and to this end designed a scheme for 'pegging' society at the level of an idealized Sparta: the Sparta of the legendary "Lycurgeoan" constitution, with its soldier citizens even more rigorously trained for their separate function and with a new caste 'in the likeness of the Athenian philosophers themselves' superimposed and given supreme authority.

That Toynbee from his vantage point in time, would have approved a different prescription for the ills of the Greek world is understandable enough; but it is surprising to find him first granting the validity of Plato's motives and then rescinding the grant in connection with the particular means which Plato adopts to his benevolent ends. For the sake of understanding more precisely the nature of Toynbee's criticism, and in partial explanation of his animus against Plato, we must take account of the essentially formal framework within which it operates: the antithesis between "arrested" and growing societies. Toynbee has earlier (III, esp pp 22, 28) depicted the nomad on the steppe, with his literal dog

and cattle, and has then compared this primitive symbiosis with the "arrested" societies that result when the nomad has conquered the inhabitants of the plowland, has converted them into his "human cattle," and has trained "human watch dogs" to assist him in managing them. Extending the parallel, through the Ottoman Turks and the Spartans, to Plato's ideal state, he now boldly applies again to its two inferior classes the original animal vocabulary (III, p 90 ff). We are told also that stability, "not happiness and not progress," is the sole end of such a state, in the service of which its members are to be dehumanized into the likeness of ants or bees. Toynbee also speaks very severely of the myth that Plato has recommended for promoting social solidarity; in this passage (I, pp 247-249), which we discuss in n 72, pp 429-430, Plato appears in the anti-Christian role of cynical inventor of convenient and repressive racialistic lies.

The "philosopher kings" themselves, however, and Plato, whose image they reproduce, seem to escape calumny. Plato is, in fact, praised for his great altruism in sending them down from their heights of contemplation to share the light of common day with their less gifted subjects. Here again, Toynbee's Plato has taken on a Christlike character: "with a heavy heart," in conscious and conscientious self-sacrifice he has laid upon his perfected philosophers this "grievous commandment" (VI pp 243-244, similarly, III 251-252). And Plato is offered what amounts to veneration for his anticipation in the *Republic* and the *Phaedo* of the Christian 'reckoning of spiritual values' in his inspiring words exalting Righteousness above wealth, honors, poetry, and all else, as the 'great hope' and "splendid prize" for which the race of life is to be run.

Finally we must list a fault which Toynbee views with grave disapproval: Plato's supposed misuse of the philosophic function, manifested in his attempt to use the power at the disposal of Dionysius II for the implementation of his philosophical ideal. To Toynbee this was Plato's confession of failure as a philosopher, whose field (Toynbee has issued this jurisdictional decree) never extends beyond 'loveless and pitiless contemplation' (VI, p 259). By thus trespassing "on the king's field of ruthless action" Plato has revealed himself as

that sinister and hypocritical thing, "a saviour with the sword in disguise" (VI, p. 269). And this, be it remembered, is the same Plato who earlier was warranted as the greatest and most Christlike of Hellenic philosophers. A partial explanation of

this apparent contradiction can be found in Toynbee's own deeply felt conviction that the only salvation for mankind lies in the healing power of "the God incarnate in a man," a role which, after all, it was not given to Plato to enact.

Appendix II

Kelsen in Conflict with his Authorities

Kelsen has invoked an imposing array of authorities in confirmation of his conception of the fifth-century Athenian attitude toward homosexuality. Citation is made from *Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics*, and also, always by means of parallel references, from a German version of this work, "Die Homosexualität in Griechenland," in Havelock Ellis and J. A. Symonds: *Das konträre Geschlechtsgefühl* (Bibliothek fuer Sozialwissenschaft, Herausgegeben von Hans Kurella, 7. Bd., 1896). It is Symonds whom Kelsen most frequently cites. He has made use, also of *Ivo Bruas, "Attische Liebestheorien," etc., 1900, pp. 17-37; *E. Bethe, "Die dorisches Knabenliebe," etc., 1907, p. 438 ff.; *H. Gomperz, "Psychologische Beobachtungen an griechischen Philosophen," 1924; *W. Kroll, *Freundschaft und Knabenliebe*, 1927, and W. Kroll, article "Knabenliebe," in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realenzyklopaedie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 21. Bd., p. 897 ff.; and others of limited scope, dealing chiefly with the relationship between Xenophon's *Symposium* and Plato's. Those which the present writer has also been able to examine are marked with an asterisk.

We here propose to summarize briefly the stand taken by each of these writers (other than Symonds, whose opinion we have already discussed) regarding the Athenian attitude toward paiderastia, in order to determine how far Kelsen is justified in the conclusion he has drawn from them.

(a) Bruns, in the course of his comparative study of the theories of love of Plato and Xenophon, asserts (e.g., on pp. 17, 18) that approval of paiderastia, including sexual indulgence, was widespread in Plato's Athens; as evidence that men of high standing were among its advocates, he points to the speakers in Plato's *Symposium*. He states, but without documentation, that "a strong family tradition struggled against" these relationships, while "on the other hand, their ethical value in many

cases could not be overlooked"; in consequence, public opinion was divided (p. 25). Bruns believes that the issue aroused discussion involving numerous disputants on either side, most of whose identities are unknown (pp. 25, 27). Among the known opponents of the indulgent paiderastia, he lists Antisthenes, but cites as evidence only the well known fragment of Antisthenes condemning love (quoted in note 162, p. 208); and in quoting this fragment, he omits the second clause, which by its reference to the corrupting effects of love upon women, shows that the sexual passion in general, and not paiderastia, was Antisthenes' primary topic. Bruns' further argument that Antisthenes is contending against someone who had deified Eros, and therefore probably against Plato, seems to forget the place of Eros in Greek literature; cf. Sophocles' *Antigone*, 781 ff. Bruns believes that Xenophon wrote his *Symposium* primarily to assert, as against Plato's *Phaedrus* and the earlier speakers in Plato's *Symposium* (mainly Phaedrus and Pausanias) the necessity of forbidding sexual indulgence absolutely, and also to urge that love should be aroused not by the youth's beauty, but by his nobility of character; yet, being "too fully a child of his time" (p. 26), Xenophon stultifies his own sermon by depicting as necessary to love the presence of this same beauty. It can, therefore, be said that Bruns believes paiderastia, even the indulgent form, to have been widely, but, he would insist, by no means universally, accepted in Plato's Athens, and to have become the subject of widespread controversy in the fourth century; even such opponents of paiderastia, however, as Xenophon, were unable to progress beyond condemning the indulgence.

(b) Bethe is primarily interested in the primitive origins of the Dorian institution, but he makes incidentally some remarks which deal with the Athenian scene. Up to the middle of the fifth century, he asserts, "Knabenliebe" (he makes no explicit distinction between its kinds), which had

been spread throughout Greece by the prestige of its Dorian originators, was accepted without question, and in its indulgent form, at Athens; but at that time there arose, as a result of the general culture awakening spearheaded by the sophists, a moral opposition; as a result (p. 446), "Knabenliebe" came to be regarded at Athens, despite open advocacy, as a vice, and this though among men of high character, such as Soerates and Plato, it bore noble fruit. A second result was the prettification (pp. 438 n., and 443) by defenders of Spartan ideals like Xenophon, of the practice as it was carried on at Sparta. Bethe's statements regarding the attitude of the sophists and the change in the climate of opinion at Athens, subjects peripheral to his interest, he has not seen fit to document. Since he has not specified the grounds of his assertion, we may limit ourselves to two remarks: (1) Apart from one incidental condemnation of the degraded form of paiderastia, contained in Xenophon's report of Prodicus' moral parable (mentioned in the text, pp. 109f.) there is no textual evidence known to me that any of the sophists of the fifth century attacked paiderastia. (2) If one talks of a shift of sentiment during the latter half of this century, in the direction of condemning the relationship, this movement must be interpreted to include Soerates, who sought not to abolish but to purify the institution. We are thus brought to see the historical injustice of treating Plato as if he had been the opponent of a high-principle reform.

(c) H. Gomperz has made a deliberately modest effort to draw light from psychoanalytic theory for the understanding of traits in the personality and thought of Parmenides and Soerates. He sees in Soerates one who spent the greater part of his life in a social milieu, that of the upper classes of Athens, among whom bisexuality was "entirely customary," and the bodily possession of the beloved youth regarded as the chief end of paiderastic relationships, with the one proviso that a civilized person should desire to possess only a youth who displayed beauty of soul as well as body (pp. 62-63). To these Athenians, Soerates' demand for absolute chastity in these relations made him appear as "an unexampled, an incomparable wonder!" (p. 66). The explanation of Soerates' atti-

tude Gomperz finds largely in his social origin from among the working people, by whom, "as we see in Attic comedy," paiderastia was regarded as something alien; it had, in fact, been adopted by Athenian "good society" from the Dorians (p. 67). For all this, Gomperz, like Bethe, supplies no documentation, except for a footnote reference to Bethe, *op. cit.*, regarding the Dorian origin of the custom, and the bare mention of Attic comedy.

(d) Kroll, *Freundschaft u. Knabenliebe*, also dispenses almost entirely with documentation. He has read Bethe, whose central thesis he rejects as inadequate, and has also apparently read Symonds, with whom he is in closest agreement. "Knabenliebe" (again with no explicit discrimination of kinds) is shown to have been at Athens in the fifth and early fourth centuries, if not as highly honored as among the Dorians, still completely open and unashamed (p. 23). He cites the evidence of the inscriptions on walls, and on vases, which deal almost exclusively with the love of youths. Moral criticism begins with the "philosophy of the enlightenment," whose chief poet is Euripides; his opposition to the bodily aspects of paiderastia is deduced from the plot of his *Chrysippus* (p. 27.) The corresponding opposition of Antisthenes is asserted but not documented. To Soerates and Plato themselves is ascribed the chief effort to cleanse and ennobly the relationship (pp. 27-28). Soerates is seen as personally relatively indifferent to the seductions of paiderastia. Plato (far from being, as Kelsen supposes, its apologist, himself oppressed by an awareness of socially despised impulses) is seen as crusading against what was, throughout most of his lifetime, the almost universal acceptance of indulgent paiderastia.

All these authorities, therefore, and particularly Symonds, lend Kelsen's case far less aid than his appeal to them might suggest. From them all he has been able to assemble a considerable number of assertions pointing in his direction; but of these, many are undocumented or inadequately based. Kelsen has also often chosen to ignore or to discount assertions which contravene his view. On balance, his authorities constitute a reputable array of witnesses against him on the central issue, and in favor of the view that decently con-

ducted paiderastia was, at the time considered, widely accepted among Athenians of good standing.

Among the leading advocates of this latter view may be listed one not apparently known to Kelsen. This is Hans Licht (Paul Brandt), who in his *Sexual Life in Ancient Greece*, 1932, especially in Chapter V, has devoted special attention to male homosexuality, reaching conclusions in general agreement with those of Symonds, though somewhat vitiated by lack of discrimination and caution. For Licht, "the knowledge of Greek erotic," including the special standing in Greece of the love between males, "is the indispensable assumption for a deeper knowledge of the life of ancient Greece" (p. 524). Like Symonds, Licht distinguishes sharply (pp. 446, 452-453) between the profligate and irresponsible love of boys and the widespread and respected "voluntary relationship . . . based upon mutual affection" which, despite its sensuality, is rooted (p. 440) "in the unexampled ethical valuation of the masculine character in public and private life." Having as its object the maintenance of the state and the development of civic and personal virtue, it is "an important factor in education." "We can also speak of a decided bisexuality among the Greeks" (p. 445). "For them [the Greeks] paiderasty, instead of a vice, was but another form of love which they regarded, not as the

enemy of marriage, but as a necessary supplement to marriage, recognized by the state; and it was publicly spoken of with just as much unconcern as it was brought into the sphere of their philosophical conversations by . . . Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle" (pp. 524-525).

Licht diverges from Symonds principally in seeing a far greater degree of sensuality among the Greeks. Thus Licht detects such sensuality even in the Homeric poems, in the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus, and believes that Socrates, though he extolled purity as an ideal, was entirely tolerant of sexual indulgence between males in most cases (pp. 445-446); he treats the speeches of such characters as Phaedrus in Plato's *Symposium* as direct expressions of Plato's own attitude, and fails entirely to mention Plato's condemnation of homosexual indulgence in the *Republic* and in the *Laws*. Licht is also willing to credit the most scandalous passages in Athenaeus, and he describes Euripides (pp. 138-139) as having courted the beautiful Agathon by presenting his love in transparent symbolism before all Athens in his play *Chrysippus*. By reason of these questionable additions to his evidence, along with his failure to emphasize sufficiently the qualifications and limitations set upon the practice of paiderastia, we have preferred in the main to follow Symonds as the safer authority.

Appendix III

The Murder of Slaves in Attic and Platonic Law

Comparison between Platonic and Athenian law dealing with the killing of slaves is rendered difficult by gaps and disputable interpretations on both sides. Plato's law (discussed by Morrow, *Plato's Law of Slavery*, pp. 47-56) divides all homicides into three large classes, accidental homicide, killing in anger, and deliberate murder. Under the first of these Plato is explicit, providing (*Laws* 865 A and D) that a man who kills his own slave shall undergo ritual purification only; if it be another's, he shall also restore the value of the slave, or (if he fails to do so without compulsion) he shall be liable to a suit for double the slave's value. Under the second heading difficulty of interpretation arises, since Plato provides (*Laws* 868 A) for the killer of his own slave, purification alone; while for the killer of another's slave he prescribes, without further explanation, purification and the payment of double the slave's value. Morrow interprets these penalties as identical with those imposed for accidental killing, reasoning that the double damages mentioned are simply the damages incurred, as in the former case, by failure to settle out of court. When Plato comes to deal with deliberate murder, the difficulty becomes acute, since here, where one would expect Plato to specify the penalty for all or any such killings of slaves by freemen, he specifies that the man who kills an innocent slave in order to conceal his own crime, "or for any other such reason," shall be liable to a charge of murder "exactly as if he had murdered a citizen" (*Laws* 872 C), and says no more. Morrow, reasoning that Plato has felt it unnecessary to visit any punishment above the penalty for accidental killing on the man who kills a slave in anger, extrapolates his finding and concludes that the same may well have been true of Plato's intention in the case of deliberate murder, except when, in the interests of public order, a slave informer is to be protected.

We may begin by questioning Morrow's

interpretation of the penalties for killing in anger. The Platonic principle of distinguishing "harm" or "damage" from "injustice" (*Laws* 862) — the first of these to be set right by restitution, the second by admonition or punishment — has given rise to the subordinate principle that, in general, restitution shall sufficiently atone for unintentional harm. Accordingly, when a slave has been accidentally killed, this is the basic penalty, though because of the solemnity attending the shedding of blood, Plato has added ritual purification. The doing of damage in anger, since for Plato it is half-involuntary, is in general to entail double restitution, or the doubling of the consequences of accidental harm, where this is possible. That this is the general rule may be seen from *Laws* 865 E and 867 C; *Laws* 879 B and 878 B-C. When the slave killed in anger is the man's own, there is no one to whom the double restitution can appropriately be made (and there may be also involved a principle of Attic law, as we shall see below); the rule, therefore, is not applied. But when the slave is another's, the double payment can appropriately be awarded to the owner, and here the rule holds. The double damages mentioned, therefore, are not the penalty for litigation, but punitive damages. Once we are freed from the necessity of believing that the killing of a slave in anger, quite unlike the killing of a freeman, is treated by Plato as deserving of no penalty beyond that entailed by accidental killing, we have no reason for believing that Plato would have allowed his citizens the privilege of cheaply murdering their slaves, and we are free to fill in the gap (if there is a gap) in Plato's law of slave-murder with conjectural provisions more in keeping with Plato's standing attitude toward murder as such.

But is there actually a gap? Morrow has argued that Plato's sentence regarding slave-murder (*Laws* 872 C, paraphrased above) cannot be taken as covering murders of slaves other than potential inform-

ers, for the following reasons. Only a few sentences earlier (*Lows* 872 A) Plato has laid down the general rule that the same penalties as those for the murder of a citizen by a citizen shall apply also to the murder of "Strangers" (foreigners) by Strangers, citizens or Strangers by one another, and slaves by slaves. Now, had Plato intended to treat in precisely the same fashion all murders of slaves by freemen, he could most simply have added this type of case to his list, this, therefore, cannot have been his intention. Secondly, Plato's willingness to exclude slaves other than slave informers from such protection can be inferred from the two Platonic principles on which, as we saw in our text, Morrow chiefly relies: the autonomy of the master, and the slave as an instrument of public order.

We argue that it is perhaps arbitrary to assert that Plato must have chosen the simplest alternative, to the neglect of all other considerations. He did, in fact, intend to impose a different and more severe penalty upon the slave who had murdered a freeman, immediately after giving the list referred to, he proceeds to specify for such a slave one of those extreme penalties we have noted with regret above, a flogging at the behest of the dead man's relatives, followed by death. It may therefore have seemed to him appropriate to reserve for the final and emphatic position in his series of penalties for deliberate murder, apart from the murders of kinsmen, the penalty awaiting the freeman who murders a slave, wishing to make it clear that despite his determination to punish to the utmost the slave who kills a freeman he is equally determined to protect the slave who is guiltless by a penalty far greater than was customary even at Athens.

Nor need we be dismayed because Plato has mentioned explicitly only one motive for the murder of a slave. In a passage in which, as Morrow has himself pointed out, Plato is being so very meticulous in listing the various possible types of murders, it is unlikely that he would knowingly have omitted a substantial group (if substantial group it was), namely murders of slaves by freemen actuated by motives other than the one named. It is at least equally probable that Plato conceived this motive alone as likely to cause freemen deliberately to murder slaves. We

are here in accord with Ritter (cited by Morrow, *op cit*, p 52), who has pointed out that some two pages earlier than the passage we are discussing, at the beginning of his legislation for murder (*Laws* 869 E-870 D), Plato has recognized three possible causes of murders, desire for wealth and pleasure, ambition, and fear of detection, of these only the last named could ordinarily apply to slaves. We ourselves may be able to imagine situations in which other motives would be responsible, but this does not prove them to have been present to Plato's mind. And we have in the disputed sentence itself the phrase, "or for any other such reason," which may be sufficiently inclusive to cover those other remotely possible base reasons of which Plato was aware.

It must also be pointed out that the intention Morrow has ascribed to Plato in this passage of protecting simply the slave informer does not suffice to explain one prominent part of Plato's sentence, the statement that the slave whom he is concerned to protect is guiltless. A slave who shared in the guilt might have as much or more information to impart. In short, it is possible, with Ritter, to interpret the sentence simply as Plato's statement of the way in which he will deal with all deliberate murders of slaves by freemen.

The provisions of Attic law covering the killing of slaves which it is agreed, must serve as the chief standard by which the humanity of Plato's law is to be judged, are likewise imperfectly known and subject to disputed interpretation. Morrow, depending for evidence principally upon scattered references in the orators and on deductions from such other sources as Plato's *Euthyphro*, has set forth the excellence of the Attic slave legislation (*The Murder of Slaves in Attic Law*, 1937). At Athens, the master of a slave killed by another was entitled to bring a homicide suit on his behalf: conviction would necessarily entail "more than a fine," and might result in the exile of the slayer. The master who killed his own slave was liable to the same type of suit which could be brought (though admittedly it seldom was brought) against him by some other member of his own family. Beyond this Morrow sees in the *graphe hybreos* at Athens a more potent and more generally available remedy for injuries to slaves, whether

committed by someone other than the master or by the master himself. In order to establish this last point he relies heavily on the possibility that the laborer on whose behalf Euthyphro was intending to bring suit against his father was regarded as the father's slave (cf. our discussion of the *Euthyphro*, pp. 403f.); on Plato's own classification of offences by masters against their own slaves as instances of *hybris*; and on the argument that if Plato had seen the necessity of invoking stringent penalties to protect the potential slave informer against his master, Attic law must have done the same, and probably by means of the *graphê hybreôs*.

It is not possible or necessary to question Morrow's case in detail. It seems clear that Attic law was capable of inflicting heavier penalties than does Platonic law on the person, other than the slave's master, who kills a slave by accident or in rage. But its other superiorities are less well established. Thus it may be doubted whether the Attic homicide law, as distinct from the law of *hybris*, protected the slave against his own master to the degree claimed. Reasons for doubting include a passage in the orator Antiphon (vi, 4) which has seemed to other authorities to imply that Attic law ordinarily prescribed for the slayer of his own slave no more than ritual purification, i.e., no more than what Plato imposed for accidental and passionate killing; this latter view is maintained by Ehrenberg (*The People of Aristophanes*, 1951, pp. 186, 188), who has not been persuaded by the force of Morrow's arguments. Nor would such a situation have been as discreditable to Athenian law as it may seem to us, since it would be possible to proceed on the assumption that under all ordinary circumstances the master would find the slave's life far more serviceable to his interests than the slave's death.

In the matter of the slave informer and *hybris* against slaves, it seems somewhat hard to have Plato's insights turned to the greater glory of Attic law and against

his own cause. Several of Morrow's arguments in favor of the probability that the Attic *graphê hybreôs* could be employed on a slave's behalf against a cruel master can with equal force be used to show that such an application of Plato's analogue to the *graphê hybreôs*, the suit for impiety, is in the spirit of Plato's law. And the argument that since Plato clearly perceived the need of protecting a slave informer, Attic law cannot have lacked adequate devices for the purpose, seems inverted. As we know from the orators (e.g., Antiphon v, 47, 48, and 52), Athenian jurymen could be expected to regard it as entirely likely that a man might murder a slave who was able to inform against him. Attic law may, therefore, have been defective here, either because the *graphê hybreôs* was not available, or because restrictions on its use made it impracticable. Plato, by requiring the use of the private homicide suit for slave murder, and by stressing the need of protecting the slave informer, is perhaps expressing his earnest intention of supplying this very lack. In connection with one particular type of case, moreover, he provides a suggestion of a practical method of ensuring that such suits will be brought, laying it as a special intention of supplying this very lack in concern themselves with the protection of such a slave informer, and this suggestion is extensible in principle to other types of case. Plato may thus be the proper recipient of the honor Morrow has assigned conjecturally to Attic law.

If, then, we set the Attic and the Platonic provisions side by side with a view to judging their comparative excellence, we see that our knowledge of both is beset by uncertainties. Judgment in favor of one or the other will depend on the interpretation given singly to many disputed points on either side; where the benefit of the doubt is most often given, there we shall find the verdict. In such circumstances, justice to Plato may require some diminution in the degree of the contrast Morrow has found.

Appendix IV

Antisthenes and Every Virtue Under Heaven

In order to establish his right to use Antisthenes as a foil for Plato, Popper has first rather arbitrarily chosen a number of facts and near facts from the very limited evidence available, and has then combined them in an intricate web of logically dubious relations in which the individual strands are doubtless intended to reinforce each other by convergence, but because of their inherent individual weakness, are unable to lend each other more than a spurious semblance of mutual support

(a) The first strand depends upon the fact that Alcidas and Lycophron, whose statements about slavery and nobility of birth we have discussed pp 141ff, 144ff, were members of the school of Gorgias, and Antisthenes also, at one time, was a pupil of Gorgias. Now, says Popper (note 43 to chapter 8, p 562), "we know (from Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, and Philodemus, *De Pietate*) that Antisthenes was a monotheist, and the form in which he expressed his monotheism (there is only One God 'according to nature,' i.e., to truth, although there are many 'according to convention') shows that he had in mind the opposition nature — convention which, in the mind of a former member of the school of Gorgias and contemporary of Alcidas and Lycophron, must have been connected with equalitarianism. This in itself does not of course establish the conclusion that the half barbarian Antisthenes believed in the brotherhood of Greeks and barbarians. Yet it seems to me extremely likely that he did." Note that Popper is here being cautious, and if a little outrunning his evidence, is at any rate frankly admitting the doubtful nature of his conclusion. If he were always equally modest, we should have little quarrel with him. But in any case, we cannot accept the implication that membership in the school of Gorgias constitutes a certificate of admission to the party of the 'equalitarians' of our pp 154, 298

(b) A second strand in the web Pop

per states, in his text, pp 149–150, that "we have sufficient evidence of Plato's hostility towards the equalitarian creed, a hostility which is seen in his attitude towards Antisthenes," who "seems to have extended" the equalitarianism of the school of Gorgias 'into the doctrine of the brotherhood of all men.' Attempting to prove this, in his note on the passage, p 561, he argues that Antisthenes, being the only other surviving Socratic who taught at Athens, must be referred to somewhere in Plato's works. He then, rather strangely, makes no reference to the several places in the dialogues where common scholarly opinion finds allusion to the logical doctrines of Antisthenes (e.g., *Sophist* 251 B, 259 B), instead, following Duemmler, he points to certain passages in the *Republic*, in which Plato speaks, scornfully and in general, of would be philosophers who bring ill repute upon philosophy by their own unworthiness, passages in which Plato uses epithets, and adds figurative descriptions (see the discussion on pp 205f of this book), partly compatible with known or supposed attributes of Antisthenes. Popper concludes that Plato is here 'very likely' (italics ours) attacking Antisthenes. It is also at the beginning of this note on p 561, that Popper says that any discussion of Plato's relation to Antisthenes is 'of course,' 'highly speculative,' since 'very little is known about Antisthenes from first rate sources.' This again is admirably cautious, but the caution is left behind in this footnote. As we have seen, in his text he states definitely that Plato's hostile attitude toward Antisthenes is known, and implies strongly that it is discreditable, he also asserts without qualification that Antisthenes is an equalitarian. The only qualified statement is that concerning the brotherhood of all men, but in due course this qualification also will vanish (see (d) below)

(c) A third thread Popper sets forth and approves cautiously, in note 47 to chapter 8, p 561, the traditional view that the Cynic school descends from Antisthenes

Now Stoicism derives, in turn, from Cynicism. Stoicism, therefore, was derived indirectly from Antisthenes, and thus the humanitarian influence which Stoicism exerted in Roman times can indirectly be credited to him (note 16 to chapter 5, pp. 510-511, and note 19 to chapter 10, p. 587). Socrates was humane, and he influenced Antisthenes (note 48 to chapter 8, pp. 563-564). Antisthenes thus is made to seem a necessary link in the transmission of the humanitarian ideal from Socrates to Stoicism, and therefore, himself, humane. But this ignores the many other channels through which ideas could pass, and reunite—e.g., Aristotle and Theophrastus (see Zeller-Nestle, 1951, p. 203) and the Platonic writings.

(d) A fourth: Antisthenes, as a monotheist, would naturally, Popper believes, be predisposed to believe in the unity of mankind (note 47 to chapter 8, p. 562). But Parmenides had been a monist, emphasizing the distinction between the One and the Many (note 37 to chapter 8, p. 560). Antisthenes' assertion of the One God who exists by nature, in contrast to the many gods of convention, suggests to Popper an affiliation with Parmenides. That there was historical connection between them is suggested by the link between Antisthenes and Gorgias, who is known to have been influenced by the logical methods of Zeno, who was Parmenides' disciple. (Note that here again, probable agreement on a particular doctrine is inferred from probable connection between two thinkers in regard to other doctrines.) Hence Popper feels free to draw what he pleases from Parmenides to fill in the blanks of our knowledge of Antisthenes. The crucial point, involving one capital confusion, is this: Parmenides had elevated his One above the Many; hence, Popper infers, Antisthenes did similarly with his one God, thus putting the many at a distance from him. Now, by a gratuitous assumption, Popper infers that the many were at an equal distance from the One, and by a sheer confusion, forgetting that Antisthenes was speaking of many gods, interprets the 'many' as men. Out of this spiral nebula of gaseous perversity emerges the preordained conclusion: Antisthenes was "probably" a believer in the brotherhood of men. Again, the "probably" is destined to drop out, in most instances, when this statement re-

appears in Popper's discussion (e.g., p. 180).

(e) Cobweb number 5: Antisthenes, asserts Popper, praised manual labor, and practiced it (note 47 to chapter 8, p. 562; note 4 to chapter 11, p. 615). From this Popper infers that he was, naturally, a great equalitarian; it corroborates the probability that the Platonic Socrates of the *Republic*, who speaks with scorn both of manual work and of slaves, is Plato's treacherous puppet, and that Antisthenes is the true continuator of the true Socrates. We show elsewhere (pp. 235-236) that Antisthenes' supposed praise of manual labor is probably founded simply on a mistake.

(f) A sixth point: Antisthenes, according to tradition, taught in the gymnasium known as the Cynosarges, a place reserved for those free men who, like Antisthenes, were not full citizens by birth. If this tradition be accepted, Popper argues, then Antisthenes must have meant to emphasize his own mixed, half barbarian descent, which is again an affirmation of his belief in human brotherhood (note 48 to chapter 8, p. 564). But it noted that Popper has passed over the more probable reason, namely, that Antisthenes had originally made this his athletic headquarters, and was simply not admitted elsewhere. A gymnasium was a convenient place of public resort, and, for a follower of Socrates, who had often conversed in such surroundings, a natural place for the carrying on of philosophic discussions.

conveyed by the repeated phrases but quite unproved by the available evidence, namely: Popper's belief that Antisthenes was, on all matters of ethical import, in the closest accord with Socrates, far closer than his other followers. Since Popper believes that Socrates was a great democrat, individualist, humanitarian, and all the rest, the one proposition that Antisthenes was in especially close accord with Socrates would go far to establish his every excellence.

Popper's chain, or rather web, stands now before us complete. As we review it, we see that every strand is weakened by some uncertainty. Of the seven, three are entirely negligible: the supposed attacks on Antisthenes in the *Republic*, the love of manual labor, and the use of the Cynosarges. The connection with Parmenides is an illusion. The affiliation with Gorgias is inconclusive. The "close" friendship with Socrates is a sentimental red herring. The

argument from Roman Stoicism is vitiated by an element of special pleading.

The modest residue of Popper's argument is sufficient to support no more than the following: It could be concluded with reasonable confidence that Antisthenes, who was a half-barbarian and a noncitizen, was opposed to discrimination against persons in this situation; that he extended this tolerance to barbarians, and that he availed himself of the nature-convention antithesis to assert that the distinction between Greeks and barbarians was merely conventional, are possibilities, but nothing more.

Popper has also adduced those affiliations of Antisthenes with Gorgias, with Socrates, and with the Cynics and Stoics of later date, which, when handled with proper care, take their place, as we shall presently see, among the accepted facts of the history of Greek philosophy.

Appendix V

Nominalism, Essentialism, and Intolerance

Popper has assigned to Antisthenes a superiority to Plato in still another area, that of the logical and metaphysical foundations of scientific knowledge, setting the "nominalism" of Antisthenes in contrast to the futile "methodological essentialism" which Popper sees as the consequence, for science, of the Platonic Theory of Ideas. In thus condemning Plato (pp 34-36), Popper is converting into a liability what historians of philosophy (who are themselves, to Popper, pp 249-250, a pestilent tribe) commonly list among Plato's most generous contributions to the higher life of mankind. This is not the place to undertake a full discussion of the issues dividing in age-long rivalry nominalists from realists (i.e., "essentialists"). But in justice to Plato I must point out an unfairness inherent in the manner in which Popper has presented Plato in this context. Popper has set over against Plato, the methodological essentialist, the whole weight of modern science, whose progress, Popper urges, has been achieved by pursuing a nominalist method. And by adducing once again his invaluable ally, Antisthenes (pp 218, 636-637), Popper believes he has shown that Plato could have taken warning from this "nominalist" of the dangers and sterilities to which essentialism was bound to lead. Two chief points are to be observed.

To deal first with the credit due to Antisthenes — A formal and a material pole of nominalism must be distinguished. To Antisthenes one may at most accord (with some misgivings in the face of other views, see Field, *Plato and his Contemporaries*, 1930, esp p 167, who believes it unlikely that Antisthenes was "concerned with the opposition between particulars and universals in the form implied by the use of terms like Nominalism and Realism") the distinction of having been one of the first formal advocates of a method which when in much later centuries it was applied to problems of scientific in-

quiry, produced results of great importance. But not even Antisthenes' most extravagant admirers have entered any material claims for him as a forerunner of modern science or even as one interested in anything bordering on scientific research. His rejection of Plato's way of inquiry did not imply that he possessed or was in pursuit of anything beyond the defense of his own method of moral intuition (see p 208) and the logical demolition of rival views. One may grant him a shrewd eye for the epistemological difficulties in the Platonic theory of the forms, but this he may be said to have shared with the author of the *Parmenides*.

We are ourselves fully committed and prepared to award honorable recognition to the early advocates of ideas destined to play important roles in later history, as we have followed Whitehead's precedent in doing for Plato. But this principle must be applied with discretion if it is not to distort history by a confusion of the past and present tense. In the instance before us, such a confusion is achieved if we impute to Antisthenes an active and conscious waving of the scientific nominalist banner. And for Popper, the maintenance of this view can be purchased only at the price of treating nominalism itself as a species of time-proof entity, with an "essential" nature waiting only to be unrolled, in short at the cost of falling into a form of that very 'methodological essentialism' of which he so strongly disapproves.

A recent critical appraisal of Antisthenes, that of G. M. A. Grube ("Antisthenes Was No Logician," 1950), goes further than I have presumed to go in a deflationary direction. Grube finds no reason to credit Antisthenes with any fundamental contribution to logic or the theory of knowledge, his reputed discoveries dwindling to the stature of "the usual sophistic and eristic tricks which Plato exposed as contrary to all philosophic or scientific investigation" (p 23).

To reply, now, to Popper's direct disparagement of Plato's theory of Ideas as being inimical to the advance of scientific thought: Plato's own "essentialism," for all its inadequacy to the solution of the problems of modern physics, had the great merit of sustaining faith in the order and intelligibility of natural processes. One may call it a stop-gap, or "interim" science, and credit it with considerable heuristic value. The proof of this lies not merely in the ancient world, in the fruitful results reached by members of the Academy in approaching astronomy from the realistic Platonic standpoint, and in the scientific inquiries of that incorrigible "essentialist," Aristotle. It is common knowledge that the revival of Platonism in fifteenth and sixteenth century Italy was not without importance for the founders of modern astronomy and physics, from Copernicus to Galileo. For a discussion of this influence, reference may be made to Paul Shorey's valuable essay, "Platonism and the History of Science," 1927.

One other aspect of essentialism requires a word. It is one of Popper's recurrent implications that a close and unholy tie unites essentialism and what he has chosen to call the "theory of inquisition" (Popper, pp. 189, 218-221). In favor of this view, he parades the familiar history of the dark ages of the Church beginning with Justinian, which finds its charter, he

avers, in the last books of the *Laws*; much of his earlier report on the *Republic* conveys the same impression. I think we may dismiss the charge that essentialism has a peculiar affinity with Inquisition by adducing as an important example to the contrary, Stoicism, with its doctrine of natural rights, its conviction that the entire scheme of human relations should be founded on the recognition of the essential nature of man as vested with rationality and bound by this natural relationship to fellowship with all members of his kind. That this doctrine is essentialist needs no further proof than its mere statement, which proclaims an answer to the question, "What is man"? That it is benevolent is no less obvious, and for our controversial purposes is made certain by the 587th page of Popper's book, where we read that "under the influence of Stoicism . . . Rome began to develop a very liberal and humanitarian outlook." Popper has also admitted, on his pp. 73 and 511, that what he calls "spiritual naturalism" is neutral as regards humanitarian and equalitarian principles, and that in the form given it by the proponents of "natural right," among them the Stoics, Aquinas, and Kant, it served admirable ends. Since in terms of Popper's definitions, "spiritual naturalism" is a form of "methodological essentialism," again Popper has shown that essentialism has no special tendency toward Inquisition.

Appendix VI

Cosmopolitanism in Fifth and Fourth Century Athens

Popper does not limit to Antisthenes the credit of having entertained ideas of human unity, but believes that such "cosmopolitanism" was widely present in Plato's Athens; in this he differs markedly, as we have noted (p. 201) with Tarn. Popper associates with this cosmopolitan "movement," in the first place, that other "movement against slavery" which he believes to have prospered greatly at Athens, and which we have shown (pp. 154ff.) to have been hardly more than a general reasonableness in the treatment of slaves shown by the ordinary citizens, plus sympathy and respect for them as human beings expressed by Euripides, plus the questioning of the theoretic basis of the institution by Alcidas and by certain unknown persons, reported by Aristotle in the mid-fourth century.

Among the direct advocates of cosmopolitanism, in addition to Antisthenes, Popper lists (pp. 562-564) Antiphon, Hippias, Euripides, Democritus, and Diogenes; he also includes (p. 566) the unexpected figure of Alcibiades. We shall speak below of the remarkable reason for which Popper thus honors Alcibiades: it is his "hopes for a universal empire of Greeks and barbarians," under his own wayward leadership. We shall also weigh and find wanting, in the main, the claims of Diogenes (p. 215). Of Antiphon enough has already been said (pp. 144ff.) to show the misinterpretation upon which his inclusion depends. Hippias' claim is based upon the one sentence discussed on pp. 147f. above. The inclusion of both Euripides and Democritus is justified apparently by the very similar fragments attributed to them (Diels believes the attribution to Democritus is probably erroneous), to the effect that "the whole earth" or "the whole universe" is "the fatherland of a noble soul" (Democritus, Fr. 217, Diels; Euripides, Fr. 1034, Nauck, 1895). To conclude from these fragments that their author or authors necessarily inferred from the ideas expressed, the proper treatment of barbarians as equals, is *a priori*

unsafe; in the case of Euripides the inference can be shown to be doubtful by passages in the plays which deny the equality of Greeks and barbarians. There is, for example, the impassioned statement of Iphigenia, a character close to Euripides' heart, as she goes to her death in order that the Greeks may conquer Troy (*Iph. Aul.* 1400): "It is right for Greeks to rule over barbarians, . . . not barbarians over Greeks; for they are slaves, and we are free." Yet although Euripides thus did not believe barbarians entitled to equal status with the Greeks, his sympathy with individual slaves has as its corollary a sympathy with individual barbarians, since the slaves who figure in his plays were often enough non-Greeks; and he presents a Medea or a Hecuba without condescension, and even with clear approval of their case against their Greek oppressors.

Adding up, then, the total recognition of human unity credibly adduced by Popper as present in Plato's Athens, we have, in addition to the amount of antislavery sentiment which we have recognized above, two declarations of the unimportance of a purely local citizenship (Hippias, Diogenes), with the added approval, in Hippias' case, of a wider (but unspecified) allegiance; we have what appears to be a biological-immoralist universalism (Antiphon); we have sympathy for the individual barbarian (Euripides); and we have a statement in praise of what may be worldwide understanding between men, or may equally well be cosmic contemplation by the wise man (Euripides, perhaps Democritus). We have also the universal implications of the ethical thought of Socrates, and of his somewhat one-sided follower, Antisthenes, to both of whom we shall attempt below to do

application of "the title 'Hellenes' rather to those who share our culture than to those who share a common blood" (*Pan* 50, trans Norlin, Loeb Library). An element of tolerance is present also in Aristophanes' sympathy, discussed on p 281, for those Athenian allies and metics who did not enjoy the privileges of Athenian citizenship. In short, the notion of human unity may be said to have been present, so to speak, in its scattered elements, to have been caught hold of by this corner or by that, by more than one thinker or poet, in much the same fashion in which, as we shall show below, Plato came near to conceiving it, though his contribution to the eventual full blown concept, like that of Euripides, was very great.

To his proof of the existence of a cosmopolitan movement in Athens Popper adds (p 563) what he calls the "attacks" of its "enemies" the Old Oligarch and Plato. In the Old Oligarch he finds what may well be, under the cover of ironical praise, a depreciation of Athenian readiness to adopt foreign foods and phrases (cf p 278). From the *Republic* he adduces such miscellaneous items as Plato's objection to the improper assumption by noncitizens of citizens' privileges, his protest against the enslaving of captured fellow Greeks, as contrasted with barbarians, and his ridicule of an ambition, on the part of an Alcibiades, to rule over both Greeks and barbarians. The two last named protests, as we have shown (pp 223ff, 228f), spring from motives quite other than hatred or scorn of barbarian peoples. The first of them cannot serve as evidence of Plato's opposition to a more humane abhorrence felt by Athenians generally against enslaving or oppressing either Greeks or barbarians, for the simple reason that such Athenian scruples did not exist (cf pp 141f and pp 319f), it is directed rather against the less humane actual practice of the Greeks (including the Athenians) of enslaving fellow Greeks in addition to barbarians. Nor need the second be taken to prove Plato's failure to honor Alcibiades' desire to extend to all races alike the benefits of a universalistic imperialism, since this estimate of Alcibiades' motives is apparently a pure gift to him from Popper. The remaining two "attacks" may indeed be taken to show the Athenians' "cosmopolitanism" in so far as this comprised an acceptance of some foreign customs and a

willingness to extend certain limited privileges, beyond the letter of the law, to foreigners resident in Athens. But all this as little implies an active Athenian movement to abolish the distinction between citizen and noncitizen as did Athenian liberality to slaves imply an abolition movement, nor does it add color to the hypothesis that any single thinker of the period had gone so far as to proclaim in theory the equality in rights and worth of men of every race.

In this connection it will be relevant to survey the findings of a recent study, *The Stranger at the Gate*, by T. J. Haarhof, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, published in 1938, destroyed in the bombing of London, and reissued in 1948 (a work of which I became aware only late in the process of preparing this book). Haarhof has surveyed classical literature for its revelation of attitudes toward noncitizens and men of other races, and also toward wider units of political organization than the *polis*, covering much of the ground which Tarn and Popper have traversed. His conclusions concerning the period in which we are interested differ from Tarn's, and superficially are more in agreement with Popper's, in that he discovers in Greece before Alexander, partly among the thinkers similarly cited by Popper, e.g., Alcidas, Democritus, and Hippias, the well attested presence of the idea of human unity (p 18), and condemns Plato as having failed to advance this idea to the degree befitting a philosopher. Haarhof has also honored as a genial cosmopolitan Herodotus, whom Popper hails as a friend of democracy. (That Haarhof has not sufficiently weighed the "negative instances" in Herodotus' equal treatment of Greeks and barbarians, will be seen by consulting the references given in our n 113, p 289.)

But the agreement with Popper on closer view is seen to be substantially less than these instances would indicate. Haarhof has included among those who show traces of the concept of human unity, several early figures, such as Empedocles, and among these he puts the Pythagorean school and Heraclitus, whom Popper would not welcome. Haarhof has denied the honor of inclusion to Anaxiphon (though on somewhat different grounds from those set forth on our pp 144f), and has questioned it in the case of Euripides. Above all, he has held up as examples of avoidance Pericles and the

common people of Athens. Haarhof is a moderate man, not given to Popper's extremes of condemnation, yet in judging the narrow exclusiveness, the intolerance toward barbarians and foreigners, and the imperialist selfishness of Periclean Athens, he has felt that some degree of severity was required.

In his estimate of Plato, he is again close to Tarn and to Popper, yet not so condemnatory as either. He lays disapproving stress on Plato's recommendation (discussed on pp. 223ff. above), that war be waged and enslavement countenanced only against barbarians, not against Greeks, and he even follows Tarn in representing this, not correctly, as Plato's advocacy or sanctioning of truceless war against barbarians. He regrets, also, Plato's limitation of his political thought to the city state. Haarhof, however, knows something of Plato's excellences as well: the Plato he depicts abhors violence, and despite his limitation to the *polis*, does not sanction the Isocratean notion of an unprovoked war of conquest against Persia; Haarhof is aware that "*en ouranôî*," as he puts it — that is to say, under the aspect of eternity —, Plato sees mankind as one, and that he extends protection to strangers within the gate.

"spirit, 'holy and unutterable, that . . . penetrates the universe,'" of Empedocles (Haarhof, p. 12) with the divine providence of the tenth book of the *Laws*, which is no respecter of persons and no scorner of details, but, like the Stoic "*pronoia*," which it so largely inspired, pervades the universe, embracing the slightest portion thereof in its benevolent and rational care. The operation of a similar differential generosity can be seen in Haarhof's judgments of some writers who have left more substantial remains, as, for example, Hippocrates, or the pseudo-Hippocrates, whom Haarhof commends for having ascribed racial differences, including differences in intellect and ethics, to variations in climate and geography. "This means," says Haarhof (p. 16), "that he ignored the current distinction between Greeks and barbarians." Similarly, Haarhof says (p. 57) of Xenophon, who chose to depict the Persian Cyrus as the ideal ruler in his *Cyropaedia*, that this proves Xenophon's freedom from any real antibarbarian prejudice: "it reduces his general acceptance of the Greek dichotomy of the world to a mere convention." Now Plato, in his *Laws* (747 C-E), ascribes the mercantile attitude of the Phoenicians and Egyptians not to race, but to climate, perhaps, or to

(indeed he goes rather further than we have cared to go in condemning the Athenian narrowness) in order to acclaim the other. As a result, he has been able to avoid Popper's dichotomy of advocates and opponents

of the "open society." His picture of the complications of attitude and the slow and piecemeal emergence of the rounded ideal, is in general conformity with the pattern which this book has attempted to trace.

Appendix VII

Plato and the Idea of Mankind

In a group of extended notes, notes 46-52, pp. 561-567, Popper gives his reasons for denying that Plato possessed the concept of "humanity" or designed his political ideal to have universal application to all mankind. To several of these notes we have already devoted attention, that is, to those concerning Antisthenes, and the alleged "cosmopolitanism" of Antiphon, Antisthenes, and Diogenes. In the remaining notes, which deal primarily with the phrase "the human race" in Plato's sentence about the philosopher kings, Popper employs arguments which may be successively answered here.

Popper, as we have indicated in Chapter 1, p. 17 above, believes that Plato is a "holist," in the sense (among others; cf. our pp. 518ff.) that he hypostatizes the state, that is, considers it a "whole" which alone has independent value, as contrasted with the human individuals who compose it; their value, on this view, is merely derivative and wholly subsidiary to the state's interest. Since, as we show in Chapter 9, Plato is not in this sense a "holist," this argument cannot hold; nevertheless we may examine its development. As a "holist," Popper argues (p. 564), Plato could not casually introduce, in the phrase "the human race," occurring in the sentence referred to, the concept of this new, larger, and more comprehensive whole; had he intended to do so, he would have been impelled (a) to prepare the reader for the introduction, and would further (b) have elaborated the new idea, or at least have referred back to the concept in his subsequent discussion. In support of this, he remarks (p. 564, note 49), that in introducing the concept of the Hellenic race, in the passage about not enslaving Greeks, Plato did go into some detail. Now, granted that in the passage about not enslaving Greeks, Plato did expand somewhat his meaning, he did not "prepare," nor does he afterward refer back to it; we therefore have one instance at least of the introduction of a more

inclusive ethical whole by this "holist" Plato, without preparation.

Popper next asks whether, in his subsequent discussion of the benefits to be conferred by the philosophic rulers, Plato again mentions "mankind" or the "race of man." He presents a list of subsequent sentences, which, he says, refer back to the philosopher-kings sentence, and reports that he found in them "if anything, a withdrawal of the ambiguous expression 'race of men'"; Plato refers simply to "city" alone, or to "city" and "individual." Now we will cheerfully admit, though there is no question of "withdrawal" of the term "human race," that in several of the subsequent passages Plato speaks only of the perfection that will be attained by cities and individual men, whenever or wherever philosophy and political power coincide. The basis of Popper's argument is removed if we remember what Plato is about: he is designing a model city, not an Alexandrian world empire; his thought is, therefore, naturally expressed in terms of the city and the individuals who compose it. It is in the scope of applicability that the universality of the Platonic scheme is manifest. Following through Popper's list of back references to the philosopher-kings sentence, we notice particularly one of them, in which it is said that without philosophic rulers, "neither city nor state nor man, either" shall become perfect (*Republic* 499 B); immediately after this comes the saying we have quoted in our text above, that by remote possibility, "even now, in some barbaric region," philosophic natures may be in control, and the ideal city may be in actual existence (499 C). What is it required that Plato must say, to make it clearer that he thinks not of Greeks alone, but of man, wherever he may dwell, who is to be benefited, whenever true philosophic rulers shall be constrained to rule? The truth is that Plato has not needed to prepare the reader for the introduction of this new "whole," wider than the city, because it has never been absent from his thought.

The whole ethical purpose of the *Republic*, the picture of the just man and the city which is like him, is founded on and presupposes the ethical and religious conception of mankind which is everywhere Plato's own.

Popper now seeks (p 565) to show Plato's lack of the idea of humanity by examining his use of the terms "man" and "human." "Except in the early Socratic dialogues" and in one passage in the *Theaetetus*, 174 E ff (an exception to which we shall revert immediately below), Popper declares that "*nouhere*" (italics ours) does Plato use these terms "to express something that transcends the distinctions of nation, race or class" or "as a moral category." Popper proceeds to bolster his assertion with a long list of examples of what he calls the 'zoological use and the use in which things human are opposed to things divine. This contention on Popper's part is somewhat puzzling because of the extreme ease with which it can be refuted. He cannot establish his case by proving that the words sometimes bear the significations alleged; he has taken it upon himself to prove that they do not occur in a universalistic sense. This being the case it is surprising to find that not even all of those uses which he lists bear out his assertions. In some (*Rep* 606 E 486 A) 'men' are not contrasted with gods but coupled in another (*Rep* 514 B) men are simply those who sit chained in the Cave of Plato's metaphor, or carry past the images which throw the shadows which they mistake for realities in another (*Laws* 890 B) they are simply the citizens of Plato's reformed state. Nor is it easy to judge what would be considered by Popper a humanitarian use unless perhaps it involved an explicit statement that all men are brothers for of the passages listed by Popper himself one at least refers to man generically as an ethical agent. *Laws* 688 C in which it is said that the confederacy of the Dorian states failed because of ignorance about the most important concerns of men and looking back a few pages to see what this may mean we discover that these 'most important human concerns are virtue particularly wisdom and human happiness that which we all wish always,' the common object of desire of all men (*Laws* 687 C). Surely any such ethical use—and they are plentiful in Plato—transcends the distinctions of nation race and

class, as examples, we suggest *Rep* 603 C, 618 B, 619 B, *Timaeus* 90 D, 937 E, 950 B-C, 951 B, a particularly impressive passage is *Iaous* 770 D-E, which speaks of "the excellence of soul which is proper to man." We should add the numerous passages in which Plato speaks of man generically as God's puppet or possession, or as the most godfearing or the most divine of animals. Nor should those passages be excluded from consideration in which the words "*anthrōpos*" or "*anēr*," or their derivatives do not occur, Plato may speak of "the just," or of "those who are to be good" as contrasted with 'those who are to be rich' or, as we saw above, in the quotation from the *Laws*, he may simply say "we." But the concept of man considered as an ethical being or as a soul must be taken into account wherever and in whatever words it is expressed.

Popper's third proof (p 565) of Plato's failure to conceive man generically is his attempt to show that Plato conceives instead, "a hierarchy of 'natures'" of man. The Idea of Man comes first in excellence then perhaps the "super Greeks" of Plato's 'city in Heaven' (the mythical, eternally subsisting form of the ideal city), then the earliest man, "the ancient primogenitor of the human race," whom on Popper's view—please remember that Popper believes Plato to be a 'historicist' in reverse (see our discussion of this idea pp 18-19 622ff)—Plato conceives to have been the best, because the first, of all mankind, then the Greeks and finally, far at the bottom the barbarians. For all this beautiful series Popper has almost no evidence, and what he has is misused. It is true that Plato considers the Idea of Man and the form of the ideal city more perfect than any actual man or city. It is not true as we shall show (pp 628 612ff) that the first man or the first city is believed by Plato to have been the most perfect, if the reader will recollect our resume of Plato's account of prehistory on p 220 above he will observe that there is in that account no trace of such an idea. It is true that Plato conceived of a hierarchy of human natures ranging from the most noble and enlightened at the top down to those poor servitors or ministers lacking in mental and moral self control whom Plato conceived to be able to serve the community only by bodily strength. These natures are not biological

cally pure races; even among the lower ranks, children may be born who are capable of rising to the top. The barbarians are not at the bottom of this series, nor are there, at the very top, only Greeks. In short, the supposed hierarchy is illusory—like Popper's notion of the nearly successful Athenian abolitionist movement.

Popper next tries to show (p. 566) that Plato's suggestion that the ideal city may exist among the far-off barbarians, has no importance for modifying Plato's conception of the low and slavish barbarian "nature." He says of the suggestion that it "rescinds the distinction between Greeks and barbarians no more than that between the past, the present, and the future." Why should this be rescinded? As Popper says, Plato is expressing a sweeping generalization. But the inclusion of barbarians is not thus to be disposed of. Nor does Plato add Popper's suggested phrase "in such an extremely unlikely place as"—a barbarian country. That Plato thought a love of knowledge to be prevalent chiefly in Greece, he has told us (*Republic* 436 A), in a passage to which we have referred before, where it is said, also, that a love of money is typical of Egyptians and Phoenicians, and a spirited temperament usual among the Thracians and Scythians. But Plato was in his day and in the main right about this, in the cultural-sociological sense in which he intended it, as the historical record shows. (We have discussed Plato's conception of the causes of these cultural differences on pp. 221f.) And there is in his statement that true philosophers may exist among barbarians, the definite assertion that love of knowledge, and men of truly golden natures, may be looked for also among the men of other lands and races. Plato did not think it at all likely that philosophic rulers would be established at any time, in Greece, or anywhere else, and yet he wished that it might be so; only so, he tells us, can evils cease for the cities or for the "race of men." Assuming that we have shown that "men" for Plato included men everywhere, this is to be credited to him also as an expression of good will toward men.

Popper's final argument (p. 566) is the

strange contention that Plato must have felt it to be no more than an "impious absurdity" to suggest that philosopher kings might exist among the barbarians; it is regarded by Plato (so Popper holds) as a mere parallel to the greater "impious absurdity" which Plato detects in Alcibiades' ambition to rule over Greeks and barbarians. The parallel is false. Plato did regard as impious absurdity such ambition to rule; he would have regarded it as anything but impious to imagine or to wish that philosophic natures should, somewhere or anywhere, undertake the responsibility of rule, within a single city. To say that a man thinks himself fit to rule over "the whole wide world" is not the same as to say that somewhere in "the whole wide world" there may be one ideally governed city, and to desire this end.

To his long note designed to prove Plato's total lack of the idea of humanity, Popper in his second edition has added the exceptions noted above, consenting to believe, now, that "in the early Socratic dialogues" the idea may be found, and recognizing in addition (p. 566) the passage in the *Theaetetus*, 174 E ff., which we have cited in our text, pp. 263-264, and of which Popper apparently was formerly unaware. This he calls "definitely humanitarian"; but since it is, as he recognizes, "in flagrant contrast" to his own picture of Plato's state of mind, he can only propose to remove it from Plato's possession by suggesting that the *Theaetetus* is "perhaps earlier than the *Republic*" and therefore still Socratic in spirit, free of the supposed Platonic "anti-humanitarian exclusiveness." But this suggestion receives no confirmation from anything else known or reasonably conjectured about the *Theaetetus*. It is at variance with Popper's basic conviction that the early Plato had no notion of the backward abyss of past time, and is bootless in any case, since Plato as late as the *Laws* is in full possession of the concept of humanity.

For a discussion of Popper's special racial interpretation of the phrase "human race," as employed by Plato in speaking of the benefits to be conferred by his philosophic rulers, see pp. 450ff., 535ff.

Appendix VIII

On the Trustworthiness of Thucydides

Against Popper's strictures on Thucydides (mainly given on his pp 155-158, and 248-249, notes 12 and 15 to chapter 10), and with the aid of certain modern authorities (principally J B Bury, *The Ancient Greek Historians*, 1909, J H Finley, *Thucydides*, 1942, and A W Gomme *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, vol I, 1945), we shall seek to confirm the truthfulness and, with indicated exceptions, the reasonableness of the historian's report upon Athenian democracy and imperialism, and thus to supply what we shall later show to be a confirmation with due qualifications, of Plato's right as good citizen and moral man to have felt as he did concerning the political issues of his day. On our way to this end we shall be obliged to venture certain personal opinions, but we shall avoid the temptation to settle any still disputed questions by definitive pronouncements of our own.

Popper begins his account of Thucydides (p 173) by warning us that we must not read Thucydides without remembering that "his heart was not with Athens, his native city," that "he was certainly a member of the oligarchic party, and a friend neither of the Athenian people, the demos, who had exiled him nor of its imperialist policy." The implications here are most questionable. Criticism of the party in power, or even of particular constitutional provisions, is not incompatible with deeper allegiance to the nation. The assumption that such must be the case, if refutation is needed, is well answered, in terms of the situation at Athens before and in the early years of the Peloponnesian war, by Gomme ("The Old Oligarch," in *Athenian Studies*, 1940, pp 238-244). Gomme shows clearly that during the years before the death of Pericles all classes at Athens, oligarchs as well as democrats, coöperated fully in "working" the constitution, later, as the war progressed, a small group withdrew from active participation, and contemplated revolution. But until dissatisfaction over the conduct of the war had spread to include large sec-

tions of the citizenry, they had no chances, and their existence did not seriously disturb the unity of the city. That Thucydides was among those who cooperated with the democracy is shown by his having accepted election as a general in 424. Further, Popper seems to intend the fact of Thucydides' banishment to count as strengthening the probability that he was prejudiced against the democracy, without allowing this same fact of banishment any importance as having perhaps formed part of a valid reason for Thucydides' unfavorable judgment upon that democracy. In short, we have here another instance of Popper's method, applied also throughout his book to Plato, of raising and exploiting unfavorable implications, which it is impossible to answer in detail, though we may note an occasional example.

Popper next tells us that Thucydides was "the greatest historian, perhaps, who ever lived," but that nevertheless what he has given us, in addition to the facts he records, is "an interpretation, a point of view, and in this we need not agree with him." Again we have a parallel with Popper's method of treating Plato which involves the occasional bestowal of almost fulsome praise, which, however, does not appear to affect the final evaluation of the man as essentially unapprovable. To prove discrediting antidemocratic bias on the part of this greatest of historians, Popper adduces two major pieces of evidence.

(1) Comparing two passages from the *History* in which misdeeds against fellow citizens are recounted in the first case committed by oligarchs in the second by democrats, Popper alleges that the former is more lightly weighed than the latter. The first passage (Thucydides I, 107) is the brief mention of an unsuccessful attempt of certain Athenian oligarchs to end at once democracy and the building of the Long Walls of Athens, then in progress, with the aid of a Spartan expeditionary force which was operating in the neighborhood, some twenty six years before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war. Popper comments in

his own person, "as sometimes happens with oligarchs, class interest superseded their patriotism" (p. 174); and he notes with disapproval that Thucydides fails to censure this "most blatant treachery." He then cites as an "illustration of the strong words Thucydides could find when he wanted to describe analogous tendencies on the side of the democrats at Corcyra," Thucydides' extended comment, following his account of an oligarchically originated revolution at Corcyra, in the course of which the victorious Corcyrean demos massacred several hundred oligarchs (Thucydides III, 81-84). It is a propos of this revolution, which Thucydides says excited particular attention, being among the first of its kind in the war, that the historian inserts a solemn comment on the unhappy moral effect of the war in general—the progressive degeneration of men's loyalties, the loss of restraint and humanity, and the readiness of either side in any civic struggle to call in outside aid, either Athenian or Spartan, as the case might be. Popper, adding as further evidence of Thucydides' bias the statement that "Corcyra had been one of Athens' democratic allies" before this revolution, which had been started by the oligarchs, conceives that he has made his case for Thucydides' unfairness in this instance (Popper, p. 174).

The faults in this proof are easily observed. In the first place, it is entirely improper to assume that one can measure Thucydides' sympathies by merely noting who gets explicitly praised or blamed. This is to impute to him an essentially moralistic method of writing history that leaves out of account his recognition of the large measure of necessity in human actions, and his habitual preference for a presentation of events that leaves open and often excludes as irrelevant the question of right and wrong. This is not to deny that Thucydides had preferences and convictions, and that he sometimes shows them. It is rather a warning against inferring from the absence of an explicit comment that Thucydides approved. A warning is also needed against too hastily deciding upon a given interpretation of the historian's broader evaluations, in view of the sobering fact that differences of opinion exist among experts. As one example among many, we may point to the dispute over the "Melian debate," an episode in the *History* in which

Athenian envoys in the sixteenth year of the war openly express their adherence to the most cynical principles of power politics: Bury believes (*op. cit.*, p. 140) that Thucydides is here presenting a simple if extreme instance of that absence of effective moral considerations which characterized Athenian imperialism at all times, and presumably all successful political activity at any time; Finley sees in the incident (*op. cit.*, p. 112) the historian's picture of the moral nadir reached by the decadent democracy in the absence of wise restraints, as contrasted with that power tempered with benevolence which was at the beginning of the war the glory of Periclean imperialism. The possibility of arriving at such divergent judgments rests upon the historian's restraint, which here, as often—but here most strikingly—makes it impossible for his reader to discern his personal outlook upon the events so impersonally recorded; Popper's charge (p. 249) that Thucydides here "tries to brand Athenian imperialism" is thus, to say the least, too

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ditionally pious. For if anything whatever is visible behind the so often impassive and sometimes subtly ironical mask of the historian, it is his scornful superiority to the "old religion," his refusal to refer happenings, toward and untoward, to the will and power of the gods, with which the old religion was inextricably involved. His frequently obtruded denials of the truth of oracles, or the monitory significance of earthquakes and astral portents, might well have brought him to answer a charge of "impiety" before the same popular Athenian court that arraigned Anaxagoras for his slanders on the sun and moon. Popper, in his effort to attach the blame of irreligion to the extreme oligarchs, "the movement itself," while still maintaining a basis for exonerating Thucydides, has been led again into his usual error of excessive system, and has ascribed to an individual whatever is necessary to make him fit into the prearranged pattern.

Popper has also charged Thucydides, as we have seen (p. 272 above), with wishing to arrest change, and with enmity to Athenian seaborne commerce; he has added as his final charge enmity to the "universalistic imperialism of the Athenian democracy" (p. 179). Since these traits are Popper's minimum definition of what it takes to make an "oligarch," this was, for him, a tactical necessity. It appears to be conceded on all hands that a mainspring of Thucydides' conception of history was a belief in the unbreakable sequence which hurries human affairs from one station to the next, admitting at the most some degree of direction by those who possess a knowledge of the recurrent patterns of events and who display the necessary promptitude of action, but never admitting of arrest. The long digression in Book I, the so-called "Archaeology," with its realistic recognition of the significance of material resources and technical development, as determinative of the particular shapes that successive stages of culture will assume, puts Thucydides once and for all in the camp of the naturalistic interpreters of history, for whom not only no return is possible, but no static preservation of the shapes assumed; he can only investigate the causes of the growth or downfall of the structures of power and value which history successively presents.

Popper's assertion that Thucydides disapproved of Athenian imperialism is a

statement that cannot be called either true or false until it is given a more definite context. As Popper first makes the charge (p. 175), he is asserting that Thucydides regards unfavorably that empire as it was "at the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war," in other words, in the last years of the Periclean administration, and not what it was destined to become in the hands of Cleon and his demagogic successors. Does Popper mean that to the mind of Thucydides "imperialism" was the same thing in both cases, and if so, how will he explain the uncontested admiration shown for Pericles (Thucydides II, 65) and the equally clear distaste for the policies of the popular leader who succeeded him? Again, we find a convenient simplification imposed on the complexity of the facts. Thucydides might well have been opposed to the later treatment of the states composing the empire without being opposed to its earlier form.

merely between interpretations or points of view, the interpretation of the events of Greek history offered by Thucydides would seem at least not less objective

But leaving Popper's attempted proof, is it true that Thucydides unfairly weighs the merits of the oligarchical and democratic parties, respectively, and that he therefore is properly suspect as a guide to sound judgment? We shall not presume to answer this question in its finer bearings, if pressed for an unofficial answer, we should be inclined to say that particularly in his judgment of individuals, Thucydides sometimes deviates from his ideal of detached observation and nonpartisan judgment. Thus he frankly reveals (Book II, 65-67) his great admiration for Pericles, and *per contra* is not able to avoid some unfairness in his treatment of such a man as Cleon, yet, as has been pointed out by Gomperz (*Greek Thinkers*, 1901, I, p 518), he does not permit his personal distaste for the man to alter in the least his reporting of the facts, even when (as in Bk IV, 28-40) these are highly to the man's credit. That his objectivity was sufficient to prevent us from being seriously deceived as to the actions and policies of the partisans of either side or their practical results, is, so far as known to us, doubted by no serious student.

(2) Popper next objects (p 175) that Thucydides has represented the Athenian empire as being in the general opinion of the Greeks at the beginning of the war, 'little better than a tyranny,' and that, by contrast, his criticism of Sparta is mild. It is on the foundations of Thucydides' prejudiced appraisals, Popper avers, that 'the official judgment of 'History'' has been built, with incalculable injury to the liberal cause throughout the generations. The distinguished historian Eduard Meyer is cited as an outstanding instance: he has followed Thucydides to the foot of the letter in associating favor for the Spartan cause with "educated" opinion, in contrast to the support given to Athens which is treated as of no importance, being only that of the uneducated masses.

Popper bolsters his assertion that Thucydides' statements on this point "are only expressions of the anti-democratic point of view," i.e. are untrue, by a general reference to other passages in Thucydides in which democratic factions in various places

are shown to be hopeful of an Athenian victory.

Yet with reference to the over all state of affairs, at the time of which Thucydides speaks, what sort of justification does Popper supply for brushing aside his testimony? None whatever, beyond, first, the assumption that Thucydides, being partisan, must have expressed here only his own partisan ship, and second, Popper's own neglect to mention any of Thucydides' remarks which tend to the dispraise of the Spartans. For it would be quite simple (and to my judgment, rather nearer the truth) to prove by parity of reasoning that Thucydides was anti Spartan. For this purpose it would be sufficient to cite the reference to the violence of the Spartan Pausanias (Thucydides I, 95), and the depiction of the narrow imagination and backward looking Spartan ideals as developed in the speeches in Book I (80-86), set, as they are, in antithesis to the noble Athenian ideals expressed in the funeral speech of the admired Pericles (Thucydides II, 35-47). As to Popper's opinions of the historians, Meyer among them, we have no wish to defend these writers further than may be implied in the statement that, to the extent to which they have followed Thucydides, they have followed what is, except in the merest details, the only sound source we have for the events of the period in question, as well as one of the most accurate of all sources for any period (See Gomme, *op cit*, pp 28-29, Bury, *op cit* pp 93-99).

As we have seen on p 272 above, Popper has set up a category of less extreme oligarchs who were supporters of the old values and of the old religion, and wishing to offer partial extenuation of Thucydides, has included him as a 'representative leader' of this group. We agree that Thucydides was attached to certain human values in Greek life, which might be called by Popper "old," among them the sanctities of kinship and civic loyalty, which partisan strife tended to obliterate, though whether Thucydides valued them particularly for their traditional quality — whether, as Popper implies (p 179), the historian viewed them as among the blessings to be regained by a return of the "state of our forefathers" — is another question. But when Popper adds the "old religion" he requires us to believe what, to my knowledge, no accredited scholar has ever held: that Thucydides was tra-

Appendix IX

The Political Import of the *Menexenus*

In view of Popper's conviction (cf. our n. 217, p. 336) that the section of the *Menexenus* describing the Athenian constitution (238 B-239 A) is a malicious attack upon the finest elements of Periclean-Athenian democracy, we feel called upon to determine as carefully as we can the serious meaning of what Plato has made his oratorical Socrates ironically declare. In general, we shall find that the irony in this part of the *Menexenus* takes the form of praising Athens for having what Plato believed to be a genuine excellence, but one which in his own day, he believed she did not possess; occasionally, he bestows on her the customary praise for having what is not, in his terms, a genuine and unqualified excellence.

We shall first summarize the relevant portion of the *Menexenus*, numbering the points of praise for the convenience of our later discussion: The imaginary orator undertakes to show (a) how the divinely favored Athenians fashioned themselves a form of government so excellent that it has ever since produced a corresponding excellence in its citizens. This polity, he says, (b) has remained essentially unchanged from the days of the kings; (c) it may be called "democracy" by some, but it is in very truth an "aristocracy," a rule of the best, with the approval of the multitude. (d) Power chiefly resides in the many, but (e) those who hold office are chosen solely because they are the wisest and best; (f) no man is barred by weakness or poverty or obscurity of birth. Alluding to the mythical origin of the Athenians from the soil of Attica, he affirms (g) that the citizens, since they are all children of one mother, will not endure to be masters or slaves of one another, but being by nature equal in birth, (h) seek lawfully equality in law (*isonomia*).

We observe, to begin with, that point (b) in the preceding summary has no precedent in the speech of Pericles (Thucydides II, 35-46), of which Popper supposes the *Menexenus* oration to be a parody,

and that point (g) is only distantly implied in Pericles' statement (II, 36) that the Athenians have always inhabited their land. Since point (g) is fully paralleled in Lysias' funeral oration (17-19), it can be regarded as probable that point (b), also, had its counterpart in the speech of some other orator or orators, and that, in fact, most or all of these themes were in Plato's day common property.

We may now examine the orator's points in the light thrown upon them by other Platonic writings. (a) The notion that good men establish good politics, which in turn breed good men, is in itself a commonplace of Greek thought, a premise common to Athenians and Spartans alike. Plato has given it much emphasis, especially in the *Republic*, the gold of the guardian class is qualifications elsewhere noted (cf. pp. 416 and 465), as one huge reaffirmation of this principle. The same conviction is less obviously, but none the less pervasively present in Pericles' speech, with its correlation of the excellence of the Athenian constitution with the merits of Athenian citizens. When Popper blames Plato for holding this view, he is by the same token attacking a presupposition of Periclean democracy. We must, of course, remember that here in the *Menexenus* Plato is making an ironical application of his serious conviction: despite his deep admiration of the Athenian polity which had produced the men of Marathon, he certainly did not think that in its contemporary form it was capable of nurturing the highest virtue in its citizens; good Athenians, if they arose in his day, did so of their own accord (*Republic* 496 A f., *Laws* 642 C).

(b) In asserting the unimportance of the constitutional changes that marked Athenian history from the days of the kings to the fourth century, Plato is clearly not satirizing Pericles, who did not make this particular point; Pericles probably would have been more likely to acclaim the changes, some of which he had himself sponsored. Nor do we find anywhere in

commending as the cultural superior to its land-bound and backward-looking Spartan rival. Not the attainment of this power but its misuse and the folly which brought it to destruction have moved the historian to reveal, implicitly but unmistakably, his adverse judgment. It is only by telescoping the story of the later stages of the war, and confusing the account of extravagances, short-sighted ruthlessness, and divided leadership, that followed the death of Pericles, with the record of the imperial Athens of Pericles, that Popper has been able to present Thucydides as the opponent of Athenian imperialism. To what appears to be his further implied charge that it is precisely the "universalistic" aspects of this imperialism which the historian opposes, we need

only reply that the contrary is more probable; certainly toward the end of the war, when the oligarchic régime of the Four Hundred attempted to set up similar oligarchies in the formerly democratically-governed cities of the empire, Thucydides saw plainly enough that this would not solve the problem of unifying the empire by mutual consent (Bk. VIII, 48, 64).

In sum, we have shown reason to believe that Popper has failed in his attempt to establish the unfounded and bigoted prejudice of Thucydides against change and against a universalistic ideal of empire, or explain away the authority and validity of the historian's solemn testimony to the existence of serious weaknesses in Athenian democracy.

equal in ability and fitness for political responsibility; the kind of equality he wished for them was the equal right of all to have their welfare considered, or, in Kantian terms, to be regarded as ends, and not simply means to the ends of others. But we know from the *Republic* that in the contemporary democracy at Athens he saw, instead, a city divided against itself, in which one group of citizens, driven to penury by the extortionate greed of the money-lenders, preyed upon another group, driving them into treasonable opposition, while quieting the inattentive bulk of the citizens with some portion of their gains (564 D-565 C). Against this backdrop of actuality, Plato felt the stage picture of Athenian brotherhood to be irony at its most mordant. But once again, he has not in this played cynic to the ideal.

(h) With *isonomia* the case is a little different. This was an ideal which Plato shared so long as he could be permitted to limit its meaning. If by "equality of rights," or "equality in law," is meant the right of all actual Athenians to participate on equal terms in every function of government, then of course Plato could not sponsor any such thing. This word and its cognates and derivatives, as Plato employs it, is sometimes associated with the cry of the libertarian extremists; examples of this use of *isonomia*, *ex isou*, etc., may be seen

in *Republic* 557 A, 558 C, 561 B, 563 B. If this association is uppermost here, his use of the vocable is decidedly ironic. But *isonomia* may also mean "equality before the law," signifying that no prejudice shall enter the administration of justice to the special advantage or detriment of an individual of any class or status, as against one of any other; and to this equality before the courts, in private disputes, Pericles had explicitly referred. In this sense, Plato was decidedly an equalitarian; see, e.g., *Politicus* 305 B-C, *Laws* 945 B ff, 955 C-D. By no possibility can Plato, in the present context or elsewhere, be turning his satire against this ideal of equal justice. If this is what is meant, the irony here can only be at the expense of the rhetorical ringers of this noble but monotonous bell, or directed against what he felt to be the actual imperfections of the justice dispensed by Athenian courts.

In fine, an unprejudiced reading of this portion of the *Menexenus* reveals a Plato who, though dissident as ever from what seemed to him the hollow program of undiluted democracy, remained in essential agreement with many of the larger aims of the Athenian polity, a man whose sharpest satire is consciously directed only at the frauds and failures and never at what he felt to be the genuinely moral heart of Athenian democracy.

Plato a serious assertion of such an extravagance. But in his respect for Solon and the men of Marathon, and his regard for traditional pieties in modes of worship, he has shown himself not destitute of the kind of sentiment to which the claim of continuity makes its appeal. Plato is not here wholly ironical; he might have said: We Athenians have a great political tradition of which we may well be proud; but we must not blind ourselves to the importance of changes that have occurred.

(c), (e) In this claim that the democracy is the rule of the best, Platonic irony is at its peak. The orator has juggled away all trace of the actual Athens, as Plato saw it, and has transformed it by rhetorical fiat, into those "islands of the blessed" of which Socrates spoke in the introduction. There may be also an echo of Thucydides' assertion (II, 65) that while Pericles led the state, what was called the Athenian democracy was in fact the rule of the first man; or Plato may be only repeating one of the stock claims of the patriot-orators. Plato's ridicule is not here directed at the ideal evoked, that of government by the wisest and best; it is only that he was far from finding it realized at Athens. As the reader of the *Gorgias* well knows, in his eyes even the best of her statesmen had catered to her material interests, to the long-run detriment of her spiritual welfare; that the successors of these men had traveled still further from the true path, is the conviction expressed on many an indignant page of the *Republic*, the *Politicus*, and the *Laws*.

(d) With the assertion that power at Athens chiefly resided in the many, Plato could but agree, when taken as a description of fact, could but deplore, as the affirmation of an unqualified ideal. At its highest and best, he viewed politics as the enlightened, the moral art of using power in the common interest, requiring an expert for its proper exercise. That the "many," in the sense of the contemporary demos of Athens, were capable of using it rightly, was, as we have so often seen, not possible for Plato to believe. But Plato was to maintain, in the *Laws*, that the "many," properly guided and supported by stable laws and customs designed to produce virtue, must be given a large part in the operation of any state other than the ideal city of the *Republic*.

(f) Touching such external goods as wealth and birth, considered as claims to

rule, we have already so fully explored Plato's views, that we may merely direct the reader to earlier pages (see pp. 261ff., 342-343). Two comments, however, may serve as reminders. Plato stood far nearer to the champions of democracy in his reluctance to admit wealth and family connections as criteria of political competence than to the oligarchs of all degrees. In Utopia, as he explained at length in the *Republic*, the gold of the guardian class is where you find it; the son of an obscure workman is to receive equal consideration as a possible future ruler of the state. With in an unreformed society, Plato seems to have recognized that a family of distinction and a certain degree of wealth were often important enabling conditions of human excellence. But his final measure was intended to be, in all cases, that excellence itself.

(g) The truly extraordinary thing about this ironic eulogy of common birth and brotherhood is that in spite of the violently unpleasant impression it first makes, as of a Plato coldly deriding the finer aspirations of his own city, whoever will look earnestly at it in the light of a general acquaintance with Plato's thought is likely to have an experience comparable to that of a person looking at a reversible illusion. As, there, the convex suddenly becomes the concave, so here the deeply Platonic quality of the ideas overwhelms our first impression, and we are instantly outside Athens, in Plato's ideal realm. Images of the *Republic* flood in: the myth of the metals, "Citizens, you are brothers and children of this land, who is your mother and your nurse"; the names that are to be given to each other by the citizens—not "masters" and "slaves," but "Preservers and Helpers," "Wagegivers and Nurturers" (condensed from *Republic* 414 E and 463 A-B). We should by now have become fully aware that Platonic irony in the *Menexenus* does not depend upon simple reversal of the vocabulary in describing things good and bad. That the sense of brotherhood uniting the citizens, imputed by the orator to the Athenian democracy, and the absence of enslavement of any group of them to any other, were in essence identical with what Plato most deeply wished for any state whose welfare he had at heart, cannot be doubted. True, he did not conceive his citizens as

equal in ability and fitness for political responsibility; the kind of equality he wished for them was the equal right of all to have their welfare considered, or, in Kantian terms, to be regarded as ends, and not simply means to the ends of others. But we know from the *Republic* that in the contemporary democracy at Athens he saw, instead, a city divided against itself, in which one group of citizens, driven to penury by the extortionate greed of the money lenders, preyed upon another group, driving them into treasonable opposition, while quieting the inattentive bulk of the citizens with some portion of their gains (564 D-565 C). Against this backdrop of actuality, Plato felt the stage picture of Athenian brotherhood to be irony at its most mordant. But once again, he has not in this played cynic to the ideal.

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Appendix X

On Plato's Supposed Primordial City

Popper argues on many pages of his book (e.g., 41, 46-47, 55-56, 81-83, 489-490, 518-521) the existence in Plato's *Republic* of two ideal cities, the one described in Books II-IV, and again reverted to in Book VIII, the other, as far as it differs from the first, described in Books V-VII. Plato is said to be setting forth, first, his remarkably successful reconstruction of a tribalist society on the model of ancient Sparta, this state, Popper maintains, Plato believed to have actually existed in the past, stamped off from the Platonic idea of a state "at the beginning of time" (no very distant date, it would seem), and perfect save for one inevitable defect in its rulers' wisdom, from it, Plato conceived the only slightly imperfect Spartan and Cretan states to have descended. Plato's own ideal state, which he proposes for adoption by the Athenians, is to be identical with this first city, with the important addition of the higher education of the guardians, including the genetic number wisdom which Plato himself will supply.

Popper's elaborate theory appears to be based upon the following considerations:

(1) Much ingenuity was devoted by German scholarship in the later nineteenth century to showing that the *Republic* was not originally "published" as we have it today, but that certain books or groups of books were written and appeared at different times. Of particular relevance here is one such hypothesis, referred to by Shorey (note on *Republic* 449 A) and by Adam (on 412 B), which detects traces of two ideal cities, divided as Popper has divided his two cities. The proponents of this view maintained that an earlier version of the *Republic* omitted the three central books, with their description of the "three waves" and of the higher education of the guardians, and that these were later interpolated. Adam rejects the idea of later interpolation, but sees symbolic significance in Plato's successive descriptions of three forms or levels of ideal cities, each excel-

lent in its own way, and each more ideal than the former: the simple city of minimum wants (Book II, 372 A-D), then the city of moral steadfastness and intellectual activity (372 D-end of Book IV), and crowning these, the philosophic city depicted in Books V-VII, see especially Adam's notes on 410 A ff., 372 D, 543 D. All this speculation, however, has not involved the idea that the simpler city of the supposed earlier version or Adam's city of moral worth and intellect combined was believed by Plato to have been an existing primordial city. Popper has himself made this adaptation of the supposed two cities, in consonance with his thesis of Plato's "historicism," or doctrine of the progressive deterioration in time of all earthly beings, starting from an initial perfection. It is interesting to observe how Popper has apparently been influenced here by Adam's interpretation of the Platonic number (see his note on 545 C ff., and Appendix) in the light of Plato's myth in the *Politicus*. Adam, with whom we cannot here agree, has seen in the myth's description of the present epoch as a period of increasing and inevitable corruption, an explanation of the ideal city's inevitable decay and a meaning for the number itself, as representing the length of the epoch. Popper has extended the myth's significance into a serious philosophy of history, and with theoretic consistency (if at the cost of grave inconsistencies of other sorts) has removed the ideal city into the early times of our era. He has also been led into a corresponding readaptation and misinterpretation of the Platonic theory of ideas, and now presents as Plato's teaching the doctrine that the first complete embodiment of each idea, including, of course, the idea of a city, constituted the ultimate perfection of its realization, never to be surpassed, and destined only to progressive and ever more rapid degeneration. We shall show on a later page (p. 628) the weakness of this position, and its consequent inability to lend support to the theory of the two

cities in the *Republic*, noting here only that the confusion between the absolutely first embodiment of an idea, and its first embodiment in the present epoch, sets the parts of Popper's argument at war with one another, and introduces unPlatonic discrepancies into Popper's version of Plato's thought.

(2) Popper also states, p. 46, that Plato makes "repeated assertions, in the *Republic*, *Timaeus*, and *Critias*, that he is describing the distant past," and, Popper adds, shows his historical intention in parallel passages in the *Laws*; all these indicate that in the main, his *Republic* is historical, and describes a city of the past. Popper subjoins in his notes, pp. 494-495, a long justification of these statements, which embodies much truth, though employed to prove mistaken conclusions. Thus Popper shows without difficulty that in many passages in the *Laws* and *Timaeus* Plato is dealing with history and the origins of things, and that he is interested in describing, at least in mythical terms, how the world was generated, and in observing how it moves, at certain times and places, toward corruption; Popper does not apparently attach any weight to Plato's recognition also of its movement at other times and places toward betterment (e.g., *Laws* 676 A and C). It is easy also for Popper to show that in the beginning of the *Timaeus* Plato says (though how seriously is another question) that an ancient Athens, later destroyed by a flood, resembled Egypt, and also resembled the ideal city of the *Republic*. But none of these facts in any way supports Popper's remarkable thesis that Plato conceived the ideal city of the *Republic*, or its near equivalent, to have come into existence at the beginning of time, or at the beginning of our epoch, and that Plato further believed this perfect society (whether one single community or a plurality, Popper leaves undetermined) to have been undergoing degeneration ever since, at varying rates, all over the world (or all over Greece), so that all existing societies were derived from it.

Popper has no Platonic text to cite in direct support of his thesis, nor from the nature of the case can we produce an explicit text to the contrary. But there are many passages which contradict it by implication, of which a few may be collected

here. (a) That Plato did not conceive the first city to have been the best is implied by the way in which the discussion of the ideal state is introduced, *Rep.* 369 B ff. The origin of the simplest society is first described; this is depicted as growing into the happy city of minimum wants (372 A); this becomes the luxurious "inflamed city" (373); and from this in turn the ideal city is fashioned. This sequence of cities, while intended as conceptual rather than strictly historical, fails to confirm the idea of original perfection, followed by degeneration, and may be used to balance the parallel sequence of cities in Book VIII, which do progress from good to bad, and thus to show that this sequence too is conceptual and schematic. In other words, Plato in the *Republic* depicts development as proceeding now in one direction, now in another, as his purpose suggests, and is not limited to a downward movement. (b) When Plato declares, *Rep.* 499 C-D, that the ideal city may have existed once in all of time past, or may in the future or even now among the barbarians exist, it would seem that he implies his disbelief in its certain past existence. If it is objected that this remark is made in Book VI, and therefore implies only that Plato did not think it likely that the second ideal city, ruled by fully-trained philosophers, had existed in the past, we may point to the parallel statement in Book IX. Popper has said that at the beginning of Book VIII, Plato reverts to discussing the first and simpler ideal city of the past. Yet here at the end of Book IX (*Rep.* 592), it is said that the perfect city which has been described, the pattern of which is "laid up in heaven," may not exist on earth and may never exist. This certainly sounds like a reference to the same philosopher-ruled city spoken of in Book VI, and lends little support either to the theory of the two cities, or to the notion that, if there are indeed two, Plato regarded the one described in Book IX as an actual city of the past.

(c) The historical passages in the *Laws* offer no confirmation of any belief on Plato's part that states in the past were ideal or akin to the ideal, and have since degenerated. The *Laws* (676 ff.) speaks of past time as enormously, perhaps boundlessly long. In these vast ages, cities of all sorts have flourished and perished, grow-

ing larger and smaller, better or worse. Floods and other catastrophes have many times reduced mankind in various parts of the earth to scattered hill-dwellers, and social development has had to begin again. Popper's statement (p. 490, n. 8) that Plato, though in his old age he has come to recognize the greater length of past time, nevertheless in the *Laws* "continues to believe the first settlement must be the best city" is rash indeed. For first, it brings into direct collision two parts of what Popper has presented to us as Plato's self-consistent theory of history. If Plato "continues to believe" the truly "first settlement" to have been the best, he can no longer believe it to have been the actual ancestor of Spartan institutions; now that he has, on Popper's supposition, at last become aware of the great length of past time, he must conceive it as a city incredibly distant, shrouded in the mists of antiquity. If he is assumed to mean "first in our era," where is there any mention of an era? Plato in the *Laws* speaks only of local or regional floods and catastrophes; he speaks of no periodically recurrent new eras of the world, such as are found in the *Politicus* myth. But since, as is quite apparent (Popper, p. 497) Popper is still using the words "first settlement," just as when he was discussing the *Republic*, to refer to the putative ancestor of Sparta, he can only mean that Plato when he wrote the *Laws* "continued to believe" best the city which was the "first settlement" since the most recent flood; Popper has therefore necessarily involved himself in abandoning the supposition that this city was for Plato the first embodiment of its Idea. Returning to our examination of the passage in the *Laws*, we find that Popper's assertion, even thus modified, is quite unsupported in the text: the reader may inspect *Laws* 680-684, where the early forms of settlement are described, without discovering any such statement, nor does Popper produce any. It is even difficult to guess which of the early forms of social organization described by Plato Popper has singled out as the "first settlement." Is it the patriarchal clan (680), or the settlement formed by federated clans (681 B-D)? Or is it the "city by the sea" (681 E), or perhaps the states composing the Dorian confederacy itself, the only form except the patriarchal clan about which Plato makes

complimentary remarks (683-684)? Yet Plato also condemns as badly planned the constitutions of the Dorian states, and represents the final (and still faulty) Spartan constitution as having been arrived at only after the addition of repeated improvements (684 E-686 A, 690 D-692 C). That Plato should have failed to name any of these forms as the "ideal city" seems an important weakness in Popper's case. If recourse is had to Plato's "evasiveness," how does Popper detect what Plato still believes? And the whole concept of Plato as dishonest, both in general and with particular reference to the present passage in the *Laws*, has been disproved (pp. 396-449, and n. 70, p. 426). (d) If Popper is employing as proof of Plato's belief in an early ideal city (as he seems to be doing on pp. 45, and 492-493) the state of affairs described in the *Politicus* myth (*Politicus* 271 D ff.), and again referred to in the *Laws* (713 A ff.), where before the dawn of the present era gods and daemons are said to have been the shepherds of men, he is certainly beside the point. This myth may show that Plato was sufficiently Greek to locate the not-too-seriously-believed-in golden age in the past; it does not indicate his belief in an actual first-and-best city, under human rulers, constituting the starting-point of historical political development. (e) We may also ask why, on Popper's theory, Plato should be unwilling to say in the *Laws* that a city of the past, the proto-Crete or proto-Sparta, is to be reconstructed so far as possible in second-best form. This would have been a gratifying compliment for the Athenian Stranger to pay to his Cretan and Spartan interlocutors, as compensation in part for the considerable amount of painful criticism of their respective states to which he is forced to subject them. Again at the end of the *Laws* (969), when Plato contemplates the possibility that the city they have planned may yet develop into the ideal state, he utters no word of hope that the original and best state may thus be restored to actuality, but speaks instead of a dream city hitherto existing in word only. So much reticence is on any rational hypothesis inexplicable. (f) Popper has stressed the fact (pp. 56 and 490, (3)) that in the *Laws* Plato describes the degeneration of the Persian empire and of the Dorian confederacy. We reply that

Plato does so because he wishes to avert such a fate from the new city of the *Laws*; as England has said (in his edition of the *Laws*, I, p. 344, quoted by Popper, p. 493), Plato is in search of "the secret of political vitality." Plato describes the origins of both these political forms in time, and does not conceive either of them to have been primordial; the Persian state is certainly not depicted as having arisen by degeneration from its more perfect predecessor, and as we have shown, there is no evidence that Plato believed the states of the Dorian confederacy to have arisen in this way.

(g) Not only has Popper employed his thesis of the two cities to confirm his inter-

pretation of the passage concerning the number; the converse is also true. Thus on his interpretation, Plato's statement that the guardians will not know the number and that for success in breeding they depend upon "reasoning and observation," demonstrates that these guardians cannot be mathematically and dialectically trained, and that therefore Plato can be referring only to the rulers of the early and incomplete city. In so far, then, as we shall in the next few pages of our text disprove Popper's interpretation of the number passage, we shall *eo ipso* undermine his supposed proof that Plato describes, at any point in the *Republic*, a historical ideal city.

Appendix XI

The Mathematics of the Muses

A discussion of the nuptial number figures prominently in the not yet fully published investigation into Plato's use of mathematics of Robert S. Brumbaugh. To an obvious mastery of the technical phase of his subject, his inquiries add a freshness and fertility of procedure which command admiration even at some points where they may provoke dissent. From parts of his work having special relevance to the number ("The Role of Mathematics in Plato's Dialectic" [unpublished thesis, typescript], 1942, Appendix A, "Early Greek Theories of Sex Determination" 1949, "Note on Plato Republic IX 587 D," 1949), supplemented by personal correspondence, I here present what he has kindly permitted me to characterize as a responsible interpretation of his general standpoint.

(1) Plato was inspired by Pythagorean and Hippocratic science with the hope of finding reliable principles according to which the higher human types required for preserving his ideal city could be bred.

(2) He believed that he possessed a theoretical knowledge of the manner in which hereditary factors, moral and intellectual, and the contributions of education and social environment, might be expected to combine in the children of parents of specified characteristics, resulting in the production of individuals fitted for specific social functions.

(3) The nuptial number, like the tyrant's number of Rep 587 D, is designed as a species of diagram. If completely constructed, it would yield a three dimensional scheme (of the combinations of four independent factors), expressing the relationships between the characteristics of children and those of their parents and capable of serving as a guide to the production of desirable types.

(4) But Plato's genetic theory entailed the prediction that, though children of "silver" natures would be born in sufficient

numbers, originating from parents of any class, the highest human types must become more rare with each successive generation. On the other hand, the empirical success of animal breeders in strengthening desired traits seemed to indicate at once the possibility that this steady decline need not occur, and the need of modifications in the theory. Plato interpreted the empirical facts as justifying the hope of improving the human breed as long as the state should continually improve its education, but believed that whenever such improvement should cease, the pessimistic prediction of the theory would be fulfilled.

(5) The irony of the Muses is occasioned by and expresses the gap between pure theory and concrete fact. The phrase *logismos mei' aistheseōs* denotes the combination of abstract mathematical theory with observation of particulars, and is descriptive of scientific method in genetics, not a scornful characterization of a method Plato regards as primitive and faulty.

It thus appears that Brumbaugh agrees with Popper in taking Plato's genetic program as Pythagorean in origin and serious in intent. Brumbaugh also takes Plato's announcement of the number through the speech of the Muses as an indication that Plato had an operationally significant number to communicate. But here the resemblance ends. Brumbaugh finds Plato's genetics inspired by a sober and scientific spirit of research capable of recognizing its own limitations and honest enough to qualify its results when these conflicted with knowledge derived from other sources. There is no suggestion that Plato hoped by his investigation to do more than increase to the utmost the stability and endurance of his best state, no magical escape from eventual decay was looked for. Plato is shown as earnestly endeavoring to implement his declared intention of assigning individual citizens to their appropriate tasks. In fine, Brumbaugh sees in these in

quiries not what Popper sees, the replacement of the philosopher's function by that of the shaman-breeder, but rather the attempt within the limits of human possi-

bility to integrate a theory of value—philosophy—with a program for its realization through the rational control of every possible agency of human betterment.

Appendix XII

Freedom of Inquiry and the Philosopher Kings

That Plato has in the *Republic* plainly declared his intention of giving his philosopher kings full freedom of inquiry is apparently not matter of dispute. Thus Crossman, taking Plato's statement at its face value, has honored him (pp. 117-118, 128) for this liberal intention; and even Popper, we judge, would agree that Plato has earnestly endeavored to give his readers just such an impression. But Popper, doubting Plato's fair words, has inspected instead the probable outcome of the practical arrangements he proposes, and in this fashion has brought himself to the conclusion (pp. 132, 145, 552-553) that Plato, "afraid of the power of thought," and knowing the inability of his inhumane doctrines to withstand fair criticism, has with open eyes made freedom of inquiry impossible within his state by forbidding his future rulers while still young to scrutinize received opinions. The special target of attack is *Republic* 537 D ff., where Plato provides that the philosophers-to-be shall not enter upon discussion of ethical principles until the age of thirty, at which time, being persons of tested stability of character, they are permitted to begin five years spent wholly in such investigations; after this, they are to descend again into the "Cave" to engage for fifteen years in practical pursuits. At the age of fifty, the now completely tested and chosen rulers will be required (540 A) to ascend to the culminating vision of the Good, and may thenceforth range the field of philosophy at will, except when called upon to serve the city.

Being under no necessity of following Popper in his search for the dishonest meaning of what Plato has said, we are free to see in Plato's provisions here an honest and regrettable error, and then to inquire into its causes and occasions. We may reject at once the notion that Plato thought his philosophy too fragile to withstand criticism, if this were competently conducted. The process of inquiry whereby

truth was to be sought was, for Plato, essentially self-correcting, a process of raising the soul by successive stages to higher and higher levels of theoretic vision; the free and full continuance of the process would necessarily be attended by a growing illumination, culminating in the moment of absolute insight, wherein the highest norm to which the human community is subject, would stand revealed. An attentive reading of Book VI of the *Republic* will show that this so-called "dialectic" quest is fully autonomous, guided only by the appropriate logical and metaphysical principles, subject to no criterion of validity imposed from without.

We are brought back to the recognition, therefore, that the dangers attending the pursuit of dialectic, which Plato sought to forestall in the ideal state (and, it is likely, in his Academy), were the fallacies and confusions into which he believed ill-prepared students would inevitably fall, and the skepticism and nihilism which (*Republic* 537 E ff.) he foresaw as probable results. For these reasons he deprecated turning loose upon the abstrusities of dialectic both the unduly young and the "late learners" (*Sophist* 251 B-C, 259 C-D), persons who in either case come to philosophy without the preliminary studies necessary to the proper evaluation of arguments. He feared also the sportive eagerness of the young, who are still "puppies" (*Republic* 539 B), to tear down all established beliefs, and the ready skepticism of the self-seeking. Hence originate the age restrictions and the character tests, and also the elaborate preliminary studies required of the philosopher rulers, who, thus prepared and selected, are to be the only persons in Plato's state to whom the investigation of basic principles is allowed.

Such proposals must be unacceptable to us, who plainly see the grave evils which, though they could never find their way into the transcendental realm of Plato's ideal city, would all too certainly enter any ac-

tual political community in which his prescriptions were put literally in practice. Yet we must not forget either the complexity of the problem Plato was confronting or the genuinely moral concern to prevent the salt of his city from losing its savor that prompted him to his unfortunate solution. The principle that philosophic inquiry must be permitted only to older students of blameless moral character Plato could have derived, on the one hand, from Socrates' teaching, and on the other, from the outcome of that teaching. For Socrates, as we see him in the *Gorgias*—on our view, the historical Socrates in this respect—deplores the teaching of rhetoric in abstraction from an endeavor to effect the pupil's moral improvement and thus to fit him for the right use of his new tools (*Gorgias* 459 D-461 A, and 463-465, taken in conjunction with 527 D-E). And it may well have appeared to Plato, in the light of the outcome, that a similar error had all unintentionally been committed by Socrates himself. Xenophon suggests that some of those who listened to Socrates—he is speaking of Critias and Alcibiades—did so out of no intention to be "improved," but merely to acquire a skill serviceable in the pursuit of their own ends. Plato too may have noticed this possibility. To wait, under the conditions contemplated in the *Republic*, till some stability of character had been demonstrated, may have seemed to him only what social responsibility demanded; even in Athens, to take precautions against teaching skill and skepticism alone, must have seemed to him imperative. We have already discussed, pp. 365-366, how in the Academy the prohibition against early dialectical initiation was apparently replaced by the provision of antidotes against facile skepticism in the form of a shared environment and guided

discussion of moral matters in company with responsible older men.

Popper, enlarging upon a theme from Cherniss (Popper, pp. 132-133; Cherniss, *The Riddle of the Early Academy*, pp. 68-70, 79), has given a very special turn to the famous passage in the *Parmenides*, 135 C ff, in which the young Socrates is cautioned by the venerable logician not to attempt too soon the definition of the virtues, but to acquire first a skill in deducing the consequences of all metaphysical suppositions. This Popper reads as Plato's warning by proxy to his young students in the Academy, and takes as a fresh instance of Plato's dread of "originality and initiative." This motivation is not that suggested by Cherniss, who offers proof (p. 83) that Plato "did not try to impose" his own doctrines "upon his students or associates from without by the constraint of persuasion or authority, for he knew that true knowledge must come from within the soul itself"; his Academy (p. 81) "was not a school in which an orthodox metaphysical doctrine was taught," to which the members "were expected to subscribe." Popper apparently was not patient enough to listen closely to what *Parmenides*-Plato suggests as the reason for delaying independent metaphysical speculation, namely: that objections against a given position may seem unanswerable to a novice, who may be induced to abandon it without more ado; but that one who knows that equal or greater objections may be brought against its contradictory, can take a firmer stand, and may eventually find answers sufficient to establish it. Dialectical training of this sort was what Plato desired for his students and what he had also proposed to provide for the future rulers of the *Republic*, as a prerequisite to the making of mature judgments in the ethical domain.

Appendix XIII

The Legend of Platonic Ethics

The present note will offer comments on Fite's critique of Plato the moralist. Fite has told us (p. 6) that he intends to say as little as possible about Plato's metaphysics, but he has devoted much space (especially chapters IX, X, and XI) to the depreciation of his ethical theory. To discuss issues so large within the limits of an appendix, will be unjust to both sides, but it appears desirable at least to indicate the sources from which an adequate defense of Plato might be drawn. One further word of preface: Professor Fite is a distinguished moralist whose own contribution to ethical theory, in a contemporary perspective, has won deserved respect. We are here, however, exclusively concerned with the use he has made of it as a means of diminishing Plato.

The brunt of Fite's attack is upon Plato's alleged pseudoscientific obsession with measurement in the realm of morals, his merely prudential and calculative conception of morality, his total failure to appreciate the value of personality, and his resulting ideal of an impersonally constructed, merely efficient social order. Omitting the last-mentioned, which is dealt with on p. 565 of the text, we shall discuss Fite's highly coherent critique under the just listed aspects, as follows:

(1) The obsession with measurement. — By taking as dogmatic Platonism the "moral arithmetic" of the last part of the *Protagoras* (in which the Socrates of the dialogue forces Protagoras to accept the unwelcome conclusion that when a man chooses between possible acts, he seeks always to maximize pleasure and minimize pain), and by combining it in a rigidly unPlatonic way with the many praiseworthy things that Plato has to say about mathematical knowledge and the identity of knowledge and virtue, Fite has constructed in Plato's name a methodology of morals which I do not believe Plato would have recognized as his own. Fite chides Plato for his adoption of an absolute point of

view, applicable to triangles but not to morality; for in the moral life, we must distinguish individual points of view: "this is just the kind of consideration, subjective, introspective, critical, that is most characteristic of modern philosophy and most conspicuously absent in Plato" (Fite, p. 195). He thus sees Plato as blind to the particularities of experience, which he scorns as beneath his rational dignity, and as making his appeal exclusively to abstract mathematical principles derived through an elaborate dialectical method from that which is above hypothesis (p. 220 ff.).

In contrast, Fite acclaims men like Protagoras, who travel and observe and base their notions of virtue and all else upon "what we call personal insight, and what we respect as personal experience of life" (p. 185). It is difficult briefly to sort out the unquestioned truths contained in this presentation from the element of unfairness. But it would seem almost a sufficient reply to remark that the contrast that Fite has noticed is not really between Plato and Protagoras. It is between two levels of moral knowledge, the common sense, experiential level, to which "Protagoras" is made to appeal, and that higher level of full rational apprehension of which "Socrates" is in quest. How indeed could Plato be supposed ignorant of what he so skillfully makes Protagoras expound? But he was not content to halt progress at that comfortable point. This sort of experience is there to be judged, and for that judgment Plato believed solemnly and understandably, whether rightly or wrongly, that we must rise to a plane beyond the empirical. From the standpoint of Fite's conviction that morality has its laws within the fluid domain of the shifting environment (we here follow the exposition of Fite's views given in *Contemporary Ethical Theories*, by T. E. Hill, 1950, p. 178) such an appeal is, of course, invalid. But in making it, Plato was revealing not his obsession with measurement, but his basic con-

viction that the order of human life should be modeled on the structure of the antecedently real world of Being (John Wild has made this the central thesis of his book, *Plato's Theory of Man*, cited on pp. 24-25).

(2) Prudential morality. — Throughout his devaluation of Platonic ethics, Fite has been denying that there is in it any idealistic aspiration. A striking example is his way of construing the *Gorgias*, so much "admired by idealizing interpreters" (p. 190). The supposedly Christian quality of Socrates' preference for suffering rather than committing injustice is demoted, and its principle discovered in the prudential consideration that would confirm the citizen of a well-policed state in regarding himself as "better off when his own house has been robbed than when he has robbed the house of another" (p. 194). To this one may retort: By parity of reasoning, one could as well reduce the Beatitudes to the worldly wisdom of Poor Richard's Almanack. In the Beatitudes as in the *Gorgias*, it is true, rewards are offered to the winners in the moral race. But they are spiritual rewards which the wicked would scarcely relish. It would be small satisfaction for the "sons of Belial" to be called the "sons of God," nor would Callicles, with his scorn of the powerless and his admiration for large desires ever more largely satisfied, find any of his ideals realized in the fulfilment of either Christian or Platonic promises. Plato is not proposing to pay the "good man" in a coinage of material advantage; Fite's suggestion that for Plato the good man is only the man who succeeds in getting more of what the bad man wants, is in effect a degradation of Plato's moral currency, in express violation of the warning uttered

by the Platonic Socrates in the *Phaedo* (69 A), one of Plato's noblest sentences, which may fitly here be read aloud: "My good Simmias, it may be that this is not the right exchange, by the standard of virtue, this trading of pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains . . . as if they were coins. May it not be that this alone is the right currency, in return for which we should exchange all these other things — wisdom . . . and true virtue, in all its parts."

(3) The failure to appreciate personality. — We have touched upon this theme in an earlier chapter (pp. 79-80). It is true that Plato is insufficiently aware of the full meaning of individuality as that principle has been developed in the modern world. But this limitation was generic, endemic in Greek culture of his period, as we saw (p. 288 above) in the speech of Pericles. Now in so far as Fite might have been content to show, against the generous hyperboles of Plato's admirers, that Plato's thought did not prophetically anticipate in this respect the deepest insights of later times, we might gladly have granted his point. But the value of Fite's recognition is offset by a counterexaggeration that leaves his sceptic reader with the illusion that a significant defect in Plato has been revealed.

In sum, Fite has employed his great wit and ample wisdom to a sad and wilful end. He has used the light of modern insights for the darkening of our understanding of the ultimate sources from which much of our illumination has been derived. His method is analytic, not in the sense proper to historical and critical inquiry, but rather in the chemical sense in which a powerful corrosive analyzes a valuable compound into its trivial constituents.

Appendix XIV

Was Plato a Historicist?

This note will discuss in detail Popper's charge against Plato of "historicism," and will seek to show that Popper has distorted the Platonic theory of Ideas in the interests of his charge.

1 (a) To establish the meaning which Popper has attached to this word "historicism" is our first care. We are told first that it is the belief, characteristic of certain social philosophies, that "they have discovered laws of history which enable them to prophesy the course of historical events" (p 5), examples adduced are the Marxist prophecy that the proletariat is destined to inherit the earth, and the defeatist belief of some democrats that totalitarianism is bound to overwhelm democracy (pp 6, 13). The consequence of such beliefs is to discourage active efforts to bring about desired changes, and to relieve men of their responsibilities (pp 6-7). Again, at the very end of his book (p 462), Popper inveighs against historicism as "a debased faith" which "tries to persuade us that if we merely fall into step with history everything must and will go right, and that no fundamental decision on our part is required."

Such a theory, as it stands would be an obvious misfit for Plato. It has accordingly been tailored to fit, and we learn that Plato, though still a historicist, is different in two respects: instead of a golden future, he believes in a golden past, and he believes "that it is possible for us to break the iron law of destiny" "by a human or rather by a superhuman effort" (which Popper, as the reader of our earlier chapters knows, supposes to be Plato's own effort) and to return to an earlier and natural form of society, which can be frozen into permanent perfection (pp 23-24). Yet Popper will still call Plato a historicist because he believes in a cosmic trend of decay, from which he wishes to escape, this constitutes, according to Popper (pp 27-28), the crime of having his "ends determined by historicism."

Now Popper is entitled, within the cov-

ers of his book, to give to his term "historicism" the meaning which he sees fit, and may therefore deny our right to protest its application to Plato on grounds other than the factual disproof that Plato held the doctrines which Popper ascribes to him. This disproof will be our major task in what follows. But we may first point out that, as we have argued in our text, pp 505f, Popper ought not in justice to demand that we disapprove equally both the "historicist" who has not succumbed to any fatalist temptation to resign his moral responsibilities nor worships "worldly success," and the one who exhibits these faults, if Popper is to recognize two varieties of historicist, one of which is innocent in large part of the sins of the other, two names or two evaluations are called for. Nor has Popper the right to assume what it is impossible in any case to prove, namely that Plato's aims were determined by anything other than his judgment of what is *per se* desirable.

Another "historicist" fault detected in Plato also turns out to be on Popper's own principles either venial or on the contrary a virtue. Popper tells us (p 26) that "the historicist is inclined to look upon social institutions mainly from the point of view of their history," while the "social engineer will hardly take much interest in the origin of institutions, or in the original intentions of their founders" but will attempt rather to suggest ways of adapting them to the purpose in view. Thus Plato in the *Laws*, when he proposes to investigate the origin of constitutions and the causes which produce changes in them by examining the changes which states have historically undergone is held (p 41) to reveal his historicist methodology. To seek by the study of the past "to ascertain the driving force of historical change" (p 46) and to find it in dissension within the ruling class, this—so it appears—is reprehensibly historicist. Now Plato's wish to discover means of adapting to given ends the complex social institution which is the

state is the attitude which Popper has ascribed (pp. 25-27) to the social engineer; he has, in fact, called Plato a "Utopian" social engineer, distinguished from the admirable "piecemeal" engineer by his concern with sweeping adaptations rather than with more partial changes. We may claim, therefore, that Plato's historical survey of changes in constitutions, undertaken for the purpose named, is not "historicist," but constitutes simply a variant of that gathering of "factual information necessary for the construction or alteration of social institutions" which, Popper agrees (p. 25), must underlie the social engineer's recommendations. That Plato examines the city state as a whole rather than a limited institution such as the police force of a modern state (a type of inquiry which Popper approves) is due partly to the simpler structure and smaller scale of ancient states, partly to that custom in the Greek world to which we have often referred, the planning of new states or reorganizing of existing ones by "lawgivers" or commissions of lawmakers, appointed for the purpose. If, therefore, Plato's "ends" were not "determined" by historicism, and if, further, his supposedly "historicist" method is merely that of the fact-finding social engineer, he should at least in these respects be honored by Popper as one who in an early age attempted to develop a "social technology" to be used for ends mistaken indeed, on Popper's view, but determined solely by a belief in their intrinsic goodness.

(b) But let us have done with these hypothetical arguments and set forth our evidence that Plato was not in fact a believer in a historical law of decay, or an adulator of the past as such. Beginning with the evidence which appears to favor Popper's theory, most of which he has himself adduced, especially on pp. 487-488, we agree to list under this heading the account of the origin of the universe in *Timaeus* 30 C ff., where the Demiurge is shown looking to the eternal forms and shown in their image creating all beings and substances roughly in the order of their excellence, ending his own labors with the creation of the rational human soul; to the created gods he leaves the making of man's lower psychic faculties and of his body; from man, in turn, are derived by degeneration woman and all lower forms

of life. Again in the *Laws* (896 ff.), Plato speaks of aoul, the self-moving motion, as first of all things which have existence, more ancient and more honorable than body. To these cosmological identifications of age with excellence may be added the mythological. Thus, as we are asked by Popper to observe, in the *Politicus* myth the present era of the world is said to be the era of the world's self-motion; bereft of the divine guidance, it trends always downward in order and in excellence, until at last, when it has become dangerously depraved, it will again be taken in hand by God and restored to its former peace and blessedness. Other instances of this mythological location of virtue and happiness in the past are found in Aristophanes' tale in the *Symposium* (189 C ff.), adduced by Popper, p. 488, describing the "double blessedness" of the globe-shaped men of the first days (cf. our p. 127). We may add to Popper's list the passage in the *Critias* (120 D ff.) where the original rulers of Atlantis, sons of Poseidon, are said to become in course of time, with the progressive dilution of their divine element by merely human blood, less just and wise. Here too may be included Popper's little quotation from the *Philebus* (16 C, trans. Fowler, Loeb Library) where Socrates introduces the philosophical method he proposes to follow as "tossed down from some divine source through the agency of a Prometheus" to "the ancients, who were better than we and lived nearer the gods," a passage clearly both mythical and poetical (it probably incorporates a latent quotation from some unknown poet) and tinged with the playful irony of self depreciation. Finally there is what we may call the pious honoring of age and antiquity, the many passages in which Plato commends respect and reverence for age and for parents, praises the virtues and wisdom of ancestors, or speaks of the wise lawgivers and philosophic teachers of the past.

These passages admit of explanation, first, by the observation that in cosmological discussion Plato is not necessarily talking of time at all. It is by no means certain that Plato's description of the creation is more than a mythical dramatization of ontological relationships. This position has lately been vigorously upheld by Cherniss in his *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy*, 1944, pp. 414-431. And even were

it shown that Plato had been speaking *sensu literali*, as Popper supposes, and that he displays his conviction that the world left its creator's hand perfect, to develop all its imperfections subsequently and of its own accord, this would not require him to believe, any more than did the medieval church, that continuous and progressive downward development had continued from that day forward. The argument in the *Laws* that soul is prior to body can similarly be explained as a dialectical refutation of the atomists, who had assigned that honor to matter. Especially when it is compared to the passage in the *Phaedrus* (245 D-246 A), also mentioned by Cherniss, *loc. cit.*, where soul is declared to be 'ungenerated,' does the dialectical nature of the proof in the *Laws* become clear. It need not, therefore, be taken as an assertion of literal, temporal relationship, but even if so taken, it would not entail the doctrine of a continuous downward trend in history.

Plato's mythical depiction of a golden past is also open to nonhistoricalist interpretation. For although Plato has stored some of his most valued beliefs in his great myths, it is often Psyche's task to distinguish in them the *Dichtung* from the 'Wahrheit.' And certainly it is not safe to conclude that the golden past depicted in some of them was the object of Plato's literal belief, when it is considered that the Greek myths generally tell of such a past, and when, moreover, others of Plato's myths and mythohistorical passages convey quite different implications, as we shall see below. The same may be said of Plato's frequently expressed piety for age, and for the ancient traditions. These tributes were expressions of a real feeling yet, as we shall presently see, this did not prevent him from respectfully questioning the claims of age to truth and reverence when higher interests demanded.

(c) But there is no need of remaining on the defensive in this dispute, for Plato has not left himself without a witness. We may examine first those texts that show Plato clear of historicalist tendencies in situations where, were he a historicalist, he could scarcely have failed to make positive indication of his view. It will be recalled that in the Myth of Er, at the conclusion of the *Republic*, Plato has described the choice of lives made by the disembodied souls who are about to descend once more to earth.

Now if Plato had had an ounce of historicalist blood in his veins, would he not have spoken of the melancholy downward trend that drags each generation of souls to inevitably lower and lower levels of degradation? In the *Phaedo* myth (113 D-114 C), and again in the *Phaedrus* myth (248 E-249 D), there is no hint of any fatal lowering of the hopes of souls in later times, but always before every soul, at every incarnation, is held the hope of bettering its lot by choosing the life of virtue. Plato's whole moral message, in deed, would be stultified by any other doctrine. This moral urgency, this preaching of the great hope, the mighty importance of the choice of every soul, how could it be reconciled with the doctrine of inevitable degeneration? And which is more central to Plato's message, his picture of a mythical age of gold, or his call for moral regeneration?

(d) Plato's earnest advocacy of the life of virtue provides also the key to the meaning of the passage in the *Laws* (904 C ff.) which Popper (pp. 38, 487) has perversely misread as an account of the inevitable and progressive degeneration of the souls of men. It forms part of the exhortation, beginning at 903 B, which is imagined to be addressed to the young man who has denied that the gods concern themselves with human affairs, for the purpose of convincing him that the gods will requite virtue and vice in accord with their true natures, and that it behooves him to seek the one and shun the other. First he is told that for the sake of the 'blissful existence' of the 'World all' he has been contrived, and that his own good and that of the All will be attained simultaneously by the divine plan. This does not reflect the mood of defeatism or appear to prophesy decay. Again and again (903 D, 904 D, 904 E, 905 A) the young man is told that goodness brings movement upward, toward happiness while evil leads downward towards the abyss, there is no general downward tendency such as Popper's one-sided paraphrase suggests, no limitation of the upward movement to the 'exceptional soul,' in whom as we saw (n. 135, p. 464), Popper unnecessarily discerns Plato's reference to his exceptional self. Plato does somewhat stress the horrors of the depths, for the benefit of his listener, whom he apparently regards as being in special danger of yielding to temptation, but the young man is told that the will is

free (904 B-C) and there is held out to him, plain to see, the possibility of rising to the company of "better souls," or even to the "height of Heaven above" "The whole dramatic context," therefore, does not as Popper says (p 487) imply an overall decline, with only extraordinary exceptions. It implies rather a continuous process of upward and downward motions, with perhaps some favorable balance (the "blissful existence" of the World all would seem to imply this), and a scale of value and happiness in which every soul has the opportunity of rising, as it has the danger of falling.

Of Popper's special translation of 904 C, "All things that share in soul," etc., it may be said, first, that it is probably wrong. The second *kata*, which he argues, is "colored" by the meaning of *katô* in the following clause, so that the soul which has changed but little is said to move "down" in level, may just as well mean "on," or, as Bury translates it, "over" the surface of space, England's interpretation of the sentence as a whole, in his note *ad loc.*, is different again for him the soul which has under gone but slight change, wanders on or over the surface of the earth, in contrast to the soul which, having been either extraordinarily wicked or extraordinarily virtuous, is immediately translated either to bliss or to Hades. But England, like Bury, takes the second *kata* as meaning not "down," but "on" or "over", so likewise do Ficino, Serenus, and Jowett. Popper's tortured rendering also yields him little advantage, for even if in these particular two sentences, Plato is stressing the downward movement which is the fate of wicked souls, in other adjoining sentences the upward movement is also declared to be possible, and every soul is said to be destined to do and suffer "what it is befitting that like should do to ward like" (the translation is Bury's, like others in this paragraph), both in this life (cf *Laws* 716 C, 728 B-D) and in the after life.

(e) Popper's use (p 488) to prove Plato's discovery of "all wisdom" "in the past," of the doctrine of *anamnêsis*, or recollection according to which the soul recognizes among the objects of earth the copies of the ideas, seen before birth, is likewise not in point, for if we take the doctrine to be historically believed in by Plato, it entails that the soul may see the ideas after death, also,

since rebirth follows rebirth, and at intervals the soul mounts once more to partake, if it is able, of the blessed vision (*Phaedrus* 249 E). Popper's argument (p 488) that as Plato was "not less keen" than Empedocles, he must have synthesized his frequent references to Hesiodic myths into a view of the present era as one of strife, is to choose what Plato must have considered the most compelling evidence and to construct in his name a cosmic pattern which, we believe, would have seemed to him to conflict with the most salient article of faith and fact of human experience, namely the eternally open choice of virtue and knowledge.

(f) We have spoken of Plato's piety for age and antiquity, which may be regarded as evidence that he regarded the past as best. Plato, it is true, strongly believed that Athens, at least, had been more glorious and more worthy of honor in the days of Solon and of Marathon, when Athens enjoyed the balanced constitution that he praises in the *Laws*. And he believed in the pieties of kinship, in itself no very historicist attitude. But he takes no systematic view of such matters, and does not, for example, regard the Athens of the days before Solon as still better, or measure the wisdom of sages of old by the degree of their antiquity. Plato was, in fact, in some what of a dilemma between paying due reverence to the past, and still judging it justly and condemning when conscience bade. Thus in the *Laws* (630 B-D), the Athenian Stranger will not have it said that the Heaven taught legislators, Lycurgus and the Minoes aimed only at a part, and that the least part of virtue, in framing the laws of Sparta and of Crete, yet he himself shortly convicts the laws themselves of nearly this same fault. Plato makes the Eleatic stranger deplore the "carelessness" of earlier thinkers in failing to make their meaning clear (*Sophist* 242 C, 267 D), courteously explaining that so much may be said with out offense (*Sophist* 243 A). He cannot approve the questioning of religious beliefs sanctioned by law and ancient tradition (*Timaeus* 40 D-E, *Laws* 887 C-E), yet plainly he cannot literally believe them (*Timaeus*, *ibid.*) and even considers them in some respects harmful (*Republic* 377 D ff., *Laws* 886 B-C, 941 B-C). He knows that the ancestral ways of educating young men to virtue were not wise (*Sophist* 229 E) and solemnly warns the aged in the *Laws* (729

B-C) that reverence is due only to those who earn it, and that the old must show reverence for the young by living blamelessly. In short, Plato indulged in no whole sale and systematic idolatry of the past.

(g) Those of Popper's arguments for Plato's historicism which are based upon Plato's supposed belief in a first and best, historically real city, the near equivalent of the ideal Republic, have already been met in Appendix X, pp 612ff. His claim that the sequence of cities in the eighth book of the *Republic* is historical is there shown to be based on a partisan choice of considerations, to the neglect of other considerations which lie at hand (e.g., the nondegenerative series of cities in *Republic* 369 B ff.) We may here add to that refutation our strenuous objection to Popper's procedure when, in his enthusiastic support of his thesis that Plato's aim in discussing types of government is to detect their fated order of decline, he describes the logical classification of states in the *Politicus* in terms which he imports, entirely without textual support, paraphrasing Plato as saying that one type of state "changes" into another, which then "deteriorates further" (Popper, p 45, and similarly on p 477). This is to interpret the *Republic* series arbitrarily, then to reflect the resulting error upon the *Politicus*, which in turn is then made to appear as confirming the original misconception.

(h) Here, too, may be mentioned again the passage in the *Theaetetus* (174 E-175 B) quoted in full on our pp 263-264, in which Plato speaks of the "unnumbered thousands of ancestors" whom every man has had, among them kings and slaves, barbarians and Greeks, and laughs at the narrow vanity of those who boast that twenty five ancestors separate them from Heracles, son of Amphitryon. Plato's sophisticated understanding as here revealed stands in striking anti thesis to the naive theory that Popper has fathered upon him.

(i) We come now to the listing of those Platonic texts which, though of course they do not deal directly with the issue—Plato had no premonition of Popper—are most strongly at variance with the historicism that Popper imputes. In the course of combatting Popper's extraordinary suggestion that Plato believed himself the destined lawgiver whose activity would initiate the new age of the world, free of all change, and statically perfect, we showed (pp 464-

465 above) that in the *Republic*, in the *Laws*, and in the *Politicus*, Plato explicitly predicts future changes leading upward to greater perfection, respectively, in men, in the constitution of the city of the *Laws*, and in the arts and sciences generally, including the science of statecraft.

To these utterly nonhistorical prophecies of future improvement, may be added Plato's depictions of progress made by man in past ages. We have already mentioned (p 220, and App X, 2 [c], p 613) that part of the *Laws* (676 ff.) in which Plato speaks of the countless cities that have arisen and perished in the past, and proceeds to reconstruct the development of Greek culture from the most recent flood in those regions down to his own day. Popper (p 41) has represented this whole section of the *Laws* as a story of the "decline and fall of human society," and has found within it, also, several smaller stories of "deterioration," e.g., of the primitive society of the hill shepherds (Popper, p 477) and of the Persian Empire (p 487). He neglects to mention that it contains also stories of the contrary movement by which all but the first of the several societies including the Persians have arisen. But most importantly he fails to note that, as we have shown, p 220, Plato is subscribing to a doctrine of successive regional epochs in each of which human culture achieves a steady advance which brings much increase of evil but which alone makes possible the highest human attainments in all the arts, including government, some flood or other natural catastrophe in a limited area has then many times intervened, and development has begun anew. We are reminded that the mythical ancient Athens of the *Timaeus* (22 B ff.), destroyed by a great flood, is imagined to have constituted such a peak.

Of the isolated survivors of the most recent catastrophe in the Greek area, Plato asks (678 B, more fully quoted on p 507 above), "Do we imagine . . . that the men of that age, who were unversed in the ways of city life—many of them noble, many ignoble,—were perfect either in virtue or in vice?" to which Clinias heartily agrees. Plato then offers an imaginary reconstruction of subsequent development, leading to the present day, assigning high honors to the simple patriarchal society of hill shepherds (679), and again to the original con-

stitutions of Lacedaemon and its sister Dorian states (684-686), but still noting imperfections in these arising from their failure to incorporate the sovereign principle of wisdom in their laws (688 E). (And it is the incorporation of this very principle, together with internal harmony and freedom from outside domination, which the polity of the *Laws* is designed to secure (701 D).) We hear (691 D) of the happy tempering of the Lacedaemonian constitution by Lycurgus and Theopompus (leaving it, however, as we well know, from earlier books of the *Laws*, e.g., 634 ff., still defective), and of the excellence of the Persian and Athenian constitutions when they, too, stood midway between monarchy and democracy. And this tempering of the one "mother-form" of government with the other is also to characterize the city for which Plato is about to enact laws (693 D, 756 E). It is apparent that we have here no tale of degeneration, but rather the preparation for a successful solution of the problem of politics. The city of the *Laws* will be the next step in the upward series, and beyond that, at the very end of the *Laws*, Plato could not refrain from adding the suggestion that from this city the ideal Republic might be born. The whole book thus becomes, in view of the historical event, a rather pathetic promise of the fulfilment of Plato's hope for mankind.

(j) That Plato's "fear of innovation" (Popper, p. 488) in the laws and arrangements of his ideal cities, though admittedly excessive, is nevertheless based on rational considerations and not, as Popper's case requires, on superstitious dread of change *qua* change, we argue on pp. 553-557, 630-631.

(k) To sum up: Popper's thesis of Plato's historicism, resting originally, or so it seems, upon his belief that Plato's *Republic* in the main describes an actual city of the past from which existing cities are descended by degeneration, derives its further support principally from a misinterpretation of the theory of Ideas (to be discussed below), from a literal interpretation of Plato's cosmology, and from selective mention of only those Platonic passages or sentences which speak of particular downward movements in history, express veneration for the past, or recount myths of the traditional golden age. It attributes to Plato incredible naivety in the conception of time and human history, stultifies his moral message, makes

necessary the suppositions of his delusions of grandeur and his dishonesty, and involves the neglect of contiguous passages and blindness to the total movement of Plato's thought in such dialogues as the *Republic* and the *Laws*, as well as in his philosophy as a whole.

II. (a) Popper's interpretation of the theory of Ideas as the foundation of Plato's historicism is compounded of the universally accepted, the disputable which is, however, supported by a responsible body of opinion among scholars, and the original; we shall attempt to take issue only with the last of these, and even here we shall contest only those elements of Popper's view which seem vital to the question of historicism.

(b) As we have seen, I. (b) above, Popper interprets the ideas (e.g., pp. 27-28, 37-38) as prior to materially existing things in the literal sense of having existed before the origin of the universe, which he believes was to Plato a temporal event. We have shown that this is not a universally accepted view; cf. Cherniss, p. 424; Cornford, for example, whom Popper quotes often and with respect, dissents from it (cf. his *Plato's Cosmology*, 1937, p. 24 ff.). Nevertheless it need not for our purpose be disputed. Plato could have conceived the ideas as prior in this sense without being a "historicist" in the sense which Popper's argument requires, namely: one who believed that the successive material copies of the ideas, from the time of the creation down to his own day, had been progressively degenerating.

(c) Popper also lays much stress (e.g., pp. 29, 478-479) upon Plato's supposed conception of the ideas as active causes, generative principles which beget, in some sense, the material things which are their copies in the world of sense. Here also, though the particular form which his conception takes may be his own, the general view of the ideas as active principles is maintained, for example, by Zeller; nor is there need for us to dispute this view, though we do not subscribe to it. Plato could so conceive the ideas without believing the world to be decaying in time; the particular man generated today is not required by this hypothesis to be any less excellent than men generated in the distant past.

(d) Nor need we oppose Popper's contention (p. 480) that at the time he wrote

the *Republic*, Plato conceived the ideas as immobile entities, "petrified, so to speak," whereas from the time of the *Sophist* onward they are more active, becoming in the *Timaeus* quasi "deified," "causes of generation." This hypothesis appears to be Popper's modification of Cornford's view (*Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 1935, pp 245-248) that from the time of the *Sophist* onward, Plato conceived of Reality as including both the Ideas, which are motionless and changeless, and the moving principle of soul or intelligence (We are unable in any way to explain Popper's (p 481) apparent citation of Cornford, *op cit*, "note to 247," as authority for the statement that "Not being" is by Plato "identified in the *Timaeus* with Space," with which the ideas mingle to beget particulars, Cornford in his note on p 247, as well as elsewhere, says, to our reading, the exact opposite, it is the Atomists for whom, he says, space is 'not being') We need point out here only that Popper's elaborate theory of Plato's changing conception of the Forms is self-defeating: it deprives him of the possibility of maintaining consistently that Plato, at the time he wrote the *Republic*, conceived the forms as 'primogenitors', they were for him then, on this hypothesis, immobile principles, useful merely for explaining the similarities of sensible things. Yet when Plato wrote the *Republic*, Popper has told us (p 41), he was already fully a historicist, and was already employing his theory of Ideas (pp 33, 37-40) for explaining degenerative social change, indeed it would appear that Popper believes the conception of the ideas as 'primogenitors' was already a mainspring of his political thought. We can therefore disregard Popper's hypothetical reconstruction of the development of Plato's views, merely observing the inconsistency of ascribing to Plato at one date a conception the premise of which he is not supposed to have possessed until later.

(e) We may pause briefly to point out a misleading form of statement employed by Popper (p 31) in expounding Plato's theory. Popper says truly enough that the usefulness of the Ideas for explaining similarities among sensibles 'does not seem to be in any way connected with historicism.' He then adds, "But it is, and as Aristotle tells us, it was just this connection which induced Plato to develop the Theory of Ideas." Does not this imply that Aristotle

spoke of Plato's historicism, and that he explicitly supports Popper's belief that Plato was a historicist? Yet all that Aristotle has done (*Metaphysics* 987 a 30-b 19, 1078 b 15) is to derive Plato's theory of ideas in part from dissatisfaction with Heraclitus' unknowable flux, in part from Socrates' search for general ethical concepts, explaining that Plato extended the range of such concepts and hypostatized them to serve as the objects of dependable knowledge, and adding the Pythagorean "numbers" as another model for Plato's conception. To represent this development as "historicism" is to beg the whole question of whether Plato's theory of hypostatized ideas is "historicism" or not.

(f) But Popper's account of the theory of ideas contains in addition an element which to my knowledge is wholly his own, and which is the point on which his whole case depends: the supposition that Plato believed the first material "child" of each idea, its earliest reflection in the temporal realm of becoming, to have been its most perfect "child," and all subsequent "children" to have been becoming progressively less perfect. Without this belief, Plato's theory would not have served him as Popper says it did (p 33), as a "theory of change," or "clue to history." Yet Popper has no proof of this. There is no Platonic, no Aristotelian text which affirms it. Popper has in Plato's works only the mythical passage in the *Timaeus* describing the origin of women and animals, and the misinterpreted passage from the *Laws*, discussed respectively in I (b) and (d) of this note. His citation (p 486) of *Laws* 895 B and 966 E in which Plato describes "soul" as the first motion, cannot prove that Plato conceived the first material entities to be the most excellent (or even that the souls of men were at first better than they are today — if that is what Popper wishes to maintain that Plato believed). The passage cited by Popper (p 486) from Aristotle (*Met* 988 a 35 and b 8 ff), which charges the Platonists with thinking of good as an accident of the formal cause rather than as a final cause, like wise cannot serve to prove that Plato believed the world to be decaying in time. The contention that Plato considered the earliest material copy of each idea to have been the most perfect remains entirely unattested.

(g) A further remarkable feature of

Popper's whole argument remains to be mentioned. In his earlier edition Popper made it evident that he was laboring under two serious misconceptions with regard to the ideas and their entry into the actual world. The first involved Popper's depiction of the ideas as "primogenitors"; it was his unawareness that in the *Timaeus*, despite the fact that Plato employs the metaphor of parenthood to describe the relation between ideas and the material things which resemble them, he does not represent them as impressing themselves upon the Receptacle, but instead represents the Demiurge as looking to the ideas and creating the material things in their image. This error has been acknowledged and corrected in the second edition (p. 479). It is not important for our argument in this section, since, as we have said, we are limiting our discussion to the vital question of the alleged superiority of the first material copies; none the less it is remarkable that so plain a feature of the creation myth in the *Timaeus* should have been thus overlooked, and that Popper, having become aware of his oversight, should have made no change in his account of the development of Plato's thought, described in (d) above.

(h) The second misconception is directly relevant to the main issue. In his first edition Popper at least twice (pp. 188, 190) reveals his mistaken belief that Plato sets "generation" in opposition to "degenera-

tion" exactly as he contrasts "the world of unchanging things or Ideas, and the world of sensible things in flux." Popper at the time he wrote his book believed, or so it would appear, that the two contrasted pairs were for Plato closely comparable. Thus he says (p. 190): "Plato often expresses the opposition as one between the world of unchanging things and the world of *corruptible* things, or between things that are *generated* and those that *degenerate*" (italics his). This misconception has been corrected in the second edition, and the sentence now reads impeccably (p. 486): "between things that are *un-generated*, and those that are *generated* and are doomed to *degenerate*"; a similar correction has been made of the parallel passage on p. 483, l. 19. Yet no further alteration has been introduced. The point to be observed is that when Popper wrote his book, he held the mistaken view that Plato distinguished sharply between "things that are generated" and "things that degenerate," supposing that Plato believed the former less corruptible (or even incorruptible) and ontologically superior. It was under this misconception that he developed his whole elaborate depiction of Plato the "historicist," the believer in the necessary superiority and relative incorruptibility of the first city, the first man, and so on. Popper has now corrected the basic error, but without abandoning or even modifying the structure reared so largely upon it.

Change and Value in Plato's Metaphysics

To his charge of enmity to political change, Popper has added the metaphysical correlate "Plato teaches that change is evil, and that rest is divine" (pp 37-38). Though we may grant that Plato attempts to guard his ideal city against the disturbing entry of conflicting opinions upon morals and his improved commonwealth against any but the most carefully considered changes either in the laws or in any custom or belief, we may still protest against this notion that he assigned value to the moveless and the permanent alone. In thus depicting the Platonic metaphysic it is true Popper can count upon the initial assent of almost all readers. There is scarcely any piece of information concerning Plato's thought so widely distributed and advertized. The entire doctrine of the eternal Forms, the foundation of his metaphysics seems to be fairly describable as the writing of this message across the philosophical sky. And yet, like many a genuine truth this one has been so used as to obscure other truths and ultimately even to damage its own validity. A theoretically adequate grounding of this view is beyond our scope but our practical purpose can be sufficiently served by a brief scrutiny of several crucial passages in the dialogues some of which Popper has himself adduced.

In the *Timaeus* and *Laws* Plato has made it quite clear that in his universe change while not an attribute of reality on its highest level is nevertheless not ranked as evil. All soul is or is constantly participating in motion (*Laws* 896 ff) and even material change is a necessary means to the attainment of the highest ends contemplated by the benevolence of Mind in its eternal effort to achieve the greatest measure of order in this "only begotten world" (*Timaeus* 29 E, 92 C). That is to say, in somewhat the sense of the word so pregnantly employed in Whitehead's title, Plato is representing change as the "process" through which "reality" effects ingression into the world of becoming. (A. E. Taylor, *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, 1928, esp pp 71-73, has

drawn parallels between Whitehead's cosmology and the *Timaeus*, stressing Whitehead's distinction between "events" and "objects." Against this interpretation Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, 1937, pp xi-xii, has protested.) And if, for Plato, the process involves a negative pole of transience, this is, so to say, the price paid for value received, and in no sense a warrant for branding the totality of the process, i.e., change as a whole, as "evil." This is what was recognized and implied by Leibniz, who while using the term "metaphysical evil" to apply to every good short of the divine goodness, was trying his best to assert his optimistic faith in the "best of all possible worlds."

Popper has cited (p 487) *Republic* 380 E ff in support of his thesis, but examination of the passage does not confirm his view. Plato is engaged in arguing that the gods should not be represented in the traditional mythological way as transforming or disguising themselves, and employs as one of the grounds of his proof the principle that a thing superlative in excellence cannot change its nature except to become less excellent. But this principle, as we shall have occasion to remark again, does not mean that change *per se* is evil. And neither does it commend "rest," in the sense of inactivity. For the Demiurge in the *Timaeus*, having fashioned the World All out of his desire that all things should be good, "was abiding as was his wont in his own nature" (42 E). That is to say, God acts and the act is good, yet God is in his nature unchanged.

Popper appeals also to *Laws* 797 C ff. Here Plato is proposing to prohibit all changes in art forms in order to prevent the contagion of change from spreading to law and custom and in justification states the general principle, "Nothing, as we shall find, is more perilous than change in respect of everything save only what is bad." He then illustrates his meaning by pointing to the effects upon bodily health of a change in diet though health may be equally well maintained on either diet the change itself from one to the other produces disturbance

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It is the same, he says, with the minds and souls of men. Yet even this apparently general assertion of the badness of change must be understood in the light of its context, and especially requires attention to the exception which it includes. Plato is describing a government and laws which he believes close to the ideal: under their guardianship, the citizens' souls are to be in good health. And since all change which affects a wholesome thing from without is disturbing to this thing, requiring readjustment if equilibrium is to be maintained, no change is to be allowed which is not in itself valuable in proportion to the value which it may disturb, i.e. the great value of the laws themselves. Plato's maxim is not "all change is bad" but "all change which endangers greater values than itself is bad." Plato's conservatism remains, but it remains subordinate to his sense of comparative values.

Finally, we may mention *Laws* 903 B ff., a passage cited in part by Popper but open to employment, instead, to prove Plato's acceptance of change. Plato here expounds an interesting theological principle comparable to some of the Christian attempts to reconcile divine providence with the existence of free will. God is said to have "designed the rule which prescribes what kind of character should be set to dwell in what kind of position and in what regions; but the causes of the generation of any special kind he left to the wills of each one of us men" (trans. Bury, Loeb Library). Here we are offered a theory of change in which each man is made the captain of his soul, whose fate will be determined in accordance with the moral law of the universe by choices of his own making. But the whole process is affirmed: it is the means to the "blissful existence" of the World-All.

Appendix XVI

Socrates and the Origins of Plato's Thought

That no view taken of Socrates and of his relation to Plato can hope to satisfy all qualified students, that indeed no detailed interpretation can hope to secure even a majority in its favor, is rendered embarrassingly obvious by the age-long history of attempts to disentangle the two men. The best that can be done, apparently, is for each writer to state clearly his "solution" and give some indication of the principal grounds on which it rests. In several sections of this book will be found partial expositions of the attitude taken toward this question, notably in passages beginning on pp. 61, 305, 399, 488, and 495. We shall not deal further in this place with the thesis upheld by Kelsen (cf. pp. 118, 466ff.), of Socrates' supposed homosexuality and resulting dominativeness, or with his relation to Plato in these two respects; nor does it appear necessary to deal directly with Winspear's and Silverberg's Socrates, who sells himself, soul and very nearly body as well, to the Athenian oligarchs (*Who Was Socrates?*, 1939). Tribute has already been paid to Socrates as humorist and teacher, and as master of persuasive argument. Focusing upon ethical and political questions, we shall bring together in summary what has been said, add some matters not dealt with elsewhere, and compare the thought of Socrates and Plato in these two departments.

It may be well, at the start, to list my "orthodoxies" in relation to the Socratic problem. The Socrates of the Platonic dialogues will be regarded here, as he is regarded by others who have addressed themselves to the question, with the exception only of Burnet and Taylor, as the spokesman, on occasion, of much that is not literally Socratic. The development which the thought of Socrates has undergone at the hand of Plato will be seen, again in the traditional way, not as a betrayal (a view Popper seems alone in holding), but as an honest endeavor on Plato's part to elicit its implications and to buttress it with consistent additions. Similarly, the *Apology*

and *Crito* will be looked to as the most hopeful sources for knowledge of the actual Socrates which we possess, to be supplemented, as is customary (here, again, Popper seems the sole exception) by the *Euthyphro* and other early dialogues of search.

The adherent of the general position just described need not be dismayed by the argument, developed with the utmost philosophical competence by H. Gomperz and most effectively restated, with supplementary considerations, by Oldfather (*"Socrates in Court,"* 1938), that the speech of Socrates which constitutes Plato's *Apology* was never delivered, and that what we possess is a free imaginative construction on the part of the pupil of what his old master might and ought to have said. For on this assumption we may still look to the ideas, and particularly to what concerns moral and religious doctrine, as an undiminished source of knowing what had passed from the mind of the older into that of the younger man. And it is this reliability of understanding that, from the point of view of our inquiry, is alone at stake. No one of the major detractors except Winspear (cf. p. 446) has argued from the premise that Socrates was not the principal author of the *Apology* (nor, as it happens, is the Gomperz Oldfather thesis noted by those students of the Socratic problem with whose works we shall have occasion to deal, since these, for the most part, were written at too early a date). Dialectically, therefore, the implications of this potentially significant thesis can be here ignored.

My divergence, however, from the larger group of recent Socratic critics will be apparent in the attempt to call attention not so much to the distinctions between the thought of Socrates and Plato (though, as remarked above, it will be recognized that these exist and are of great importance), as to those other elements which seem to me common to both, and which, when detected in Plato alone, bring Plato into disfavor with modern liberals. In the carrying out of this intention, appeal will be made to what

seems almost a truism, but still a principle often overlooked in practice by those who would sharply divide the two men. Plato's failure, in any given early work such as the *Apology*, to state explicitly or attribute to Socrates some conception which is developed in another, later work, is not to be taken as proof either that Plato, at the time of writing the former, lacked the conception in question, or that Socrates himself did not maintain it, to establish this, other evidence than mere omission will be required.

As a second principle of interpretation, we shall call upon the complexity and many-sidedness of Socrates, or, as it might be expressed, the apparent inconsistencies which were held in suspension in his thought. Any credible Socrates must somehow account for and make possible the diverse interpretations put upon him by his contemporaries or near contemporaries, or at least by those who acknowledged him as master and teacher. Thus there must be found in him a point of attachment for the concern of Aristippus for attaining maximum satisfaction, a requirement which warns us against too transcendental a conception. There must be a source for Antisthenes' exaltation of "Socratic strength" of bodily toil and strenuous self-denial. We must account somehow for Xenophon's common-sense philosopher, believer in knowledge for use, and advocate of Spartan simplicity of living and law-abiding citizenship. Our "real" Socrates must have some point of similarity—though here no close relationship need be shown—with the unwashed head of the school of pseudoscience and sophistic argument depicted by Aristophanes. And he must tally above all with at least the earlier aspect of Plato's Socrates. The very list of these requirements should suffice to prove that no simple man will do, and relieve us (as Jaeger also has pointed out, *Paideia*, II, 1943, pp. 24-27) of the necessity of presenting a man who is plainly and obviously consistent.

Another principle may be derived from consideration of Socrates as he appeared to those who had the best vantage point of observation. This is the improbability that his teaching included important elements which failed to reappear in the doctrines of any of his disciples or in the portraits of him which they present, or to attract the attention of any outside observers.

A fourth principle not to be lost sight

of is that Socrates cannot be reduced in scale to the size of any of the smaller 'Socrateses' included in the list above. As a force is measured by the displacement, so the momentousness of a personality is shown by the influence it exerts. Our Socrates will do better to err on the side of largeness than of pettiness and mediocrity.

In view of my basic intention and the principles just listed, the Socrates to be presented will probably differ in some respect from all the others with whom the reader is conversant, in ways which will be indicated.

The first trait which Socrates must possess is clearly a predominant concern with morality and man. Here we have no speculator on physical science, or student of mathematics and astronomy for their own sakes, no intellectual descendant of such a man is recorded. It seems not at all necessary to believe that in this respect the Socrates of Aristophanes is true to life, he is rather a figure displaying the picturesque Socratic traits of neglect of externals—poverty, simplicity of dress, Spartan endurance of hardship—the Socratic skill in debate and some minor Socraticisms such as talk of midwifery to souls, all these being compounded with characteristics drawn from sophists of every sort, to form a composite scapegoat for all dissenters from traditional Athenian beliefs, and all teachers of disturbingly novel doctrines. Whoever holds this view (which agrees closely with that of Ehrenberg, *The People of Aristophanes*, 1951, pp. 275-277), clearly can not permit Aristophanes to persuade him to join Burnet and Taylor in believing that Socrates in middle life was still primarily a student of nature. Nor need one accept the recent revival of this position sponsored by Snell ('Das frühe Zeugnis über Sokrates,' 1948) and developed in detail by W. Schmid ('Das Sokratesbild der Wolken,' 1948), particularly unacceptable is Snell's readiness to detect explicit references to Socrates in Euripidean aphorisms and in the Old Oligarch (II 19), and Schmid's assumption pp. 212 and 215, required for the support of his position that the Socrates of the *Apology* deliberately misrepresents his own earlier held doctrines. At the same time, it is possible to agree with Rogers (*The Socratic Problem*, 1933 p. 90) in thinking that Socrates may have felt an early interest in

such matters, such as Plato records (*Phaedo* 96 A ff.), and even—though this appears less certain—some residual knowledge and interest carried forward into maturity, such as the practical Xenophon ascribes to him (*Mem.* IV, vii, 1-6).

From this standpoint we can now examine Popper's use of the statement made by the Socrates of the *Apology* (19 C-D) that he "knows nothing" at all of speculations about "things beneath the earth and in the heavens" and "has no share" in such "knowledge." We agree that these statements make against the Burnet-Taylor hypothesis of an early Socrates fitted to Aristophanes' specifications. But the words used for "know" and "knowledge," *epaiō* (cf. *Crito* 47 B-48 A) and *epistēmē*, both imply expert or professional knowledge, or scientific certainty. What Socrates disclaims is that he is in any sense an expert in, or "professes," physical or astronomical knowledge, or has demonstrative knowledge of either—that is, he denies that he could have offered instruction in astronomy, which had been specifically forbidden by the law under which Anaxagoras was condemned. This denial need not preclude an interest in and acquaintance with the speculations of other men.

Popper employs Socrates' disclaimer, secondly (Popper, p. 599, [a]), as an aid to proving the falseness of the "Socrates" of the *Republic*, for the implied reason that the latter is an advocate of the higher mathematics as a propaedeutic to philosophy, and is obviously conversant with the field. We should agree that Socrates the man was almost certainly far less a student of mathematics than Plato's Socrates of the *Republic*. Yet we should make two objections to Popper here: He has himself claimed as genuinely Socratic the mathematical demonstration carried out with the help of the slave in the *Meno* (cf. p. 148 above), and therefore he cannot claim that the real Socrates, as he conceives him, had no concern with mathematics. We are on safer ground in leaving open the question whether mathematics as distinct from physics and cosmology is included in Socrates' disclaimer in the *Apology*. Our second objection is that even though the Socrates of the *Republic* is conceded to be unhistorical in the extent of his interest in mathematics, this is in itself neither a betrayal by Plato of his master nor a proof that in any other

specified respect the Socrates of the *Republic* is false. What we should judge to be the case is rather that, seeing in Socrates' method of starting from a hypothesis and examining its consequences, and then, having amended the hypothesis as required, repeating the process, a method basically akin to mathematical deduction, Plato generalized the similarity thus detected with fruitful results. In so doing he exemplified the treatment to which he has in so many respects subjected the Socratic insights.

The third use which Popper has made of the disclaimer of Socrates in the *Apology* is his argument (pp. 599 [a] and 591-593, note 44) that since the real Socrates had nothing to do with speculations about "things beneath the earth or heavenly things," he cannot have believed in an immortal soul, as does the Socrates of the *Phaedo*. Socrates was not necessarily including among such matters the soul; the context shows that he is referring to the subject matter of cosmological inquiry, along the lines of the Ionian physicists. Aristotle's statement, *Met.* 989 b 34, cited by Popper, to the effect that the Pythagorean speculations were "all about nature" is not lightly to be taken, as Popper takes it, to be exactly true, and to mean exactly what he understands by it. Those to whom the proper interpretation of this passage seems to merit further investigation may see Cherniss (*Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy*, 1935, esp. pp. xii-xiii), who shows at length the unwisdom of treating as genuinely historical Aristotle's often highly dialectical transformations of the ideas of his philosophical predecessors; see also his discussion (pp. 237-239) of the particular objection Aristotle is here urging against the Pythagoreans (namely: that their abstract numbers, conceived as first principles, cannot account for the existence of the material universe or the changes it undergoes), a purpose which has colored the statement cited by Popper. Socrates' belief in a soul as a part of man akin to the divine, and perhaps capable of survival after death, whether he derived the conception from Pythagorean or from Orphic sources, would not be disproved by his denial of participation in cosmological and physical speculations.

The second trait which appears to char-

aeterize the Socrates of the *Apology* is a firm religious faith. There is, unmistakably, his sense of the divine guidance of his own life, first by the *daimonion* which would always halt him if he approached any evil, and second by the command of the god of Delphi (21 A ff., 28 E-29 A, 31 D, 33 C, 40 A-C, 41 D); coordinate with this is his unshakable faith in the cosmic grounding of human good (41 C-D); and it seems to me necessary to add his serene belief in the certainty, humanly speaking, of immortality. On this last point probably no more than a certain number of readers can be expected to agree that the Socrates of the *Apology* and *Crito* reveals as plainly (if less emphatically) as does the Socrates of the *Phaedo* both his belief in immortality and his reservation that this belief is not certain; it is but as certain as merely human knowledge of such matters can be, and extreme doubt of it passes into what is called in the *Phaedo* "misology" (cf. *Apology* 23 A-B, 29 A-B, 40 C ff., and *Crito* 54 E, with *Phaedo* 63 B-C, 66 E, 90 B-91 C, 107 B). True that in his concluding speech to those who have voted for his acquittal, Socrates presents death as a problematic alternative between extinction and undiminished survival, but it is noticeable that the climactic position is given to survival. So, too, in the *Crito*, the address made to Socrates by the personified laws of Athens ends with their solemn warning that he will not be well received, if he does wrong in this world, by their "brothers, the laws that govern the world to come." On this interpretation, the contrast between the *Apology* and *Crito* and the *Phaedo* is much softened, the *Phaedo* appearing as the elaboration of the simple faith of Socrates with a variety of metaphysical arguments; all three dialogues (and we may add the *Gorgias*) breathe a common air of faith in the soul as in some sense a spiritual substance, and no mere perishable accident of the body.

It is plain from Cornford's view (*Before and After Socrates*, 1932, pp. 75-77) and Jaeger's (*Paideia*, II, pp. 42, 46) that the *Apology* can be read as the utterance of an agnostic. Similarly Dodds (*The Greeks and the Irrational*, 1951, p. 210) implies his belief that it was Plato who transformed "the rational Socratic psyche" into an immortal soul. It is possible only

to record my own conviction, call attention to the passages on which it is based (cf. also pp. 64-65, 433-434), and list among those who see the matter in a similar (though not necessarily identical) light, e.g., A. K. Rogers (*The Socratic Problem*, 1933, pp. 75-77), R. W. Livingstone (*Portrait of Socrates*, 1938, esp. p. 75), and, somewhat ironically, one of those very skeptics in whose admired image Popper appears to have remodeled his Socrates, Bertrand Russell (*A History of Western Philosophy*, 1945, p. 89).

It appears, however, that Popper stands alone in denying to Socrates so much certainty as the affirmation that there exists an objective human good, founded in the nature of man and of the universe, and, after a fashion, accessible to knowledge. Socrates' declaration that he "recognizes that he is in truth of no account in respect to wisdom" (*Apology* 23 B), and that his wisdom, such as it is, consists in the fact "that what I do not know, I do not think I know either" (21 D, trans. Fowler, Loeb Library), cannot cancel out his assertion that "I do know that it is evil and disgraceful to do wrong and to disobey him who is better than I, whether he be god or man" (29 B, Fowler), nor, as we have argued, pp. 302ff., his certainty in affirming a schedule of values other than those of the worldling and the ordinary man in the street. (This position is in complete agreement with Rogers, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77.) Related to this certainty is the universal validity assumed to be the property of the knowledge toward which Socrates directed his search. Socrates and his interlocutor are always engaged in seeking, not a separate truth for each, but the truth for both, valid in itself and for all men (cf. *Crito* 49, *Gorgias* 472 B-C). This truth must be accepted by any man who is to benefit by it—he must be "persuaded" of its truth; and Socrates' undogmatic method and initial assumption, in dealing with most of his interlocutors, of a greatly exaggerated ignorance is of immense importance for securing the consent of his fellow investigator to any conclusion that may be reached. And it is not to be overlooked that even in the most Socratic dialogues agreements are attained. *Crito* consents to Socrates' conclusions at many points, and the *Euthyphro*, to name but one example, before it reaches its final failure to define

piety, has achieved unanimity between the parties to the discussion on not a few vital propositions (e.g., the 'holy' is not holy because the gods love it, but of its own nature, 10 E, the gods are not in need of the services of men, 15 A) In view of these facts, Socrates' assertion that his wisdom consists in his knowledge of his own ignorance appears as an instance of those memorable but cryptic sayings characteristic of Socrates and requiring interpretation, in this case it is to be understood in the light of those passages in the *Phaedo* to which we have referred p 635 above, in which Socrates declares that only disembodied souls can really know (cf also *Apology* 23 A-B, where it is said that only the god is wise), but that we may attain by reasoned argument such knowledge as is possible to man This conclusion receives support from two of the principles with which we began our discussion neither Plato nor the historical Socrates can be held to the requirement of developing all his views on any one occasion, and no one of his disciples so far as we have record, maintained a skeptical or critical dualist" position

Closely related to the claim that Socrates believed in no objective moral truth is the claim far more frequently made on his behalf namely that he was an advocate of freedom of speech in general, a martyr to the right of every individual man to see his own duty or his own good and to champion it openly This claim, persuasively urged by Grote (*Plato*, I, e.g., pp 295, 305), has been repeated by many others e.g., Bury, (*A History of Freedom of Thought*, 1913 pp 33-35), Crossman (pp 86-88), and Popper (cf our p 300) Yet as we have argued (pp 304-306), there seems no reason for this attribution of a generalized liberalism to Socrates Many a martyr has died not for any man's right to speak openly, but for the truth as he himself saw it, and in the absence of any statement of the more general principle it is surely dangerous to supply it There is further the absence from among the disciples of Socrates of any advocacy of such a principle or even of any discussion of it as present in the teaching of Socrates

A further trait observable in Socrates is his faith in reason as the touchstone of truth and the means to its attainment, and in knowledge, which is virtue The ex-

amination of oneself and of others "about virtue" (*Apology* 38 A) is the best thing in human life The Delphic injunction "Know thyself" Socrates may be understood to have interpreted as the command to pursue this self examination, and the knowledge "about virtue" which is to result, we may follow Plato in believing, was for Socrates the same knowledge which is virtue, because, once known in full clarity (so far as this is humanly possible), it determines the will It can not, therefore, consist ultimately only in the knowledge of one's own ignorance The end of the search is not helpless uncertainty and doubt, but such certainty as Socrates himself possessed, though he did not forget that only the god is truly wise

In this connection we may reply to Popper's charge that Plato has subtly perverted the meaning attached by Socrates to "Know thyself" For the modest Socrates, Popper asserts (pp 551, 600-601) it meant only 'Know thy own ignorance', and for him, only those who were wise in this sense were fit to rule But Plato in the *Philebus* (48 C-49 C), declaring that the powerful who do not know their own ignorance, but believe themselves wiser than they are, are terrible and hateful and bring injury upon others implies his own vicious doctrine that the powerful must be wise, and Popper bids us recollect that wisdom for Plato consists in "initiation into the deeper mysteries of dialectic philosophy" or training in the Royal Science of politics'

Now it is not disputed that by "Know thyself," the Greeks in general most commonly had meant "Know your own measure," "Recognize the limits of your moral qualities and powers," as is attested by E G Wilkins, in her thesis "*Know Thyself*" in *Greek Literature*, University of Chicago Libraries, 1917, pp 12-13, 15 And Socrates would naturally start from this meaning, giving it often (though by no means always) the specific sense of 'Know the limits of your knowledge' Thus in the *Apology* Socrates doubtless has "Know thyself" in mind when he declares (23 A-B) that his "service to the god" has made him wise in knowing the limitations upon his own wisdom (cf p 635 above), in respect to which he is "of no account" And those who suppose themselves wise when they are not, exemplify for him the lack of self knowledge at its

worst. But even in the *Apology*, as we have seen, Socrates does not declare that he knows nothing; there are several vastly important items of his knowledge which have survived his sharpest scrutiny. It is hard to believe that the Socrates of the *Apology* would have dissented from the doctrine that the wise are those who, doubting their own worldly wisdom, know unshakably the supreme importance of caring for their souls, and acknowledge objective justice and right as standing above all other goods.

Turning to the other half of Popper's charge, we may assert that wisdom in this very sense is for Plato the proper qualification for the possession of power. True that Plato believes the practice of dialectic—the "examination of life," and "talking about virtue," as Socrates (*Apology* 38 A) had called his version of this process—the proper avenue to stable wisdom of this sort; true that such investigation of truth and acquisition of virtue constitute for Plato training in the art of politics (cf. pp. 364f.); and in both these convictions Plato is still Socratic in very large measure. We may doubt that Plato's proposed methods of training, or those of Socrates either, for that matter, are the only or even the best devices for producing an unshakable dedication to right action. But this leaves standing and without reproach Plato's conviction that those who lack wisdom thus defined are hateful and harmful as rulers.

From the Socratic faith in reason springs another Socratic tenet, his belief in the expert, the man who knows. In every field of human endeavor, Socrates argues in the *Apology* (25 A-B), some few men excel; the rest are laymen. Even in matters of morality the rule should hold; he would expect to find one Athenian or at best a few who are able to make young men better. Such a man the record shows he considered himself to be, modestly and hesitantly but yet forced to it by his inability to discover a better. He alone was fully aware of the true schedule of values, the true means to the fulfillment of god's will. Those who were able even to accept his teaching were few, and would always be so (*Crito* 49 D); the many remained unconvinced, hostile, ready to silence and condemn him. Out of the spiritual inequality thus exemplified could develop the

doctrine of the varying spiritual capacities of men which we find in the *Phaedrus* and in the *Republic*. Whether it is itself Socratic or Platonic we cannot say; but it has its roots in Socrates.

The aim of the expert in the care of souls is to assist men in attaining virtue, or the excellence proper to man. And inseparable from the Socratic conception of such virtue is its ultimate and universal desirability. Compared with it, all other benefits or advantages are of no account. To do injustice, this is true misfortune, from which if he could Socrates would wish to save his judges (*Apology* 30 C-D), and which he himself will at all costs avoid (*Crito* 47 D-48 A). But the man who keeps himself thus unspotted can suffer no real harm. Toward this ultimate security, the god himself has specially enjoined upon Socrates the obligation to assist others, but it does not rest on him alone. He urges those of his judges who have voted for his acquittal, if they would deal justly with him, after his death to admonish his sons to care for their souls (*Apology* 41 E). He does not say so, but he implies that such concern for others' true welfare is owed by all men, and particularly by kinsmen and fellow citizens, to one another.

Before considering the political outlook of Socrates we may pause to sum up the moral teaching we have been expounding: the central concern with man, the sense of man's nearness to the divine and of the momentousness of his moral choices, the belief that for all men one good is appointed and one path to this good, namely reason, and the call for the moral expert who knows how to minister to souls. From all these there results, as concerns the few who have received the call (and this includes Antisthenes as well as Plato), the obligation to benefit others morally, to destroy error, and to give birth in reasoned discussion to true knowledge; for themselves and for these others also there results the good for man, the soul well cared for.

The first characteristic of Socrates as a "politician," as we see him in the *Apology* and *Crito* (and also in Xenophon), is certainly his "apolity," his abstinence from direct participation in the political affairs of Athens. He tells us in the *Apol-*

ogy 31 D-32 A, that he has conceived it to be no part of his duty to court death by opposing the popular will, which, as he says, he would certainly have been compelled by his principles to do on more occasions than the one famous instance of the trial of the Arginusae generals (cf our p 318). We wish to point out that when Popper (p 152) calls the expression of a similar reason for refraining from politics, made by the "Socrates" of the *Republic*, "sour and most un-Socratic," he is overlooking this passage in the *Apology*. We have here a characteristic instance of Popper's double standard, applied on the one hand to the Socrates of the *Apology* and on the other to him of the *Republic*, on the basis of which the two are made to appear as saint and sinner.

This abstinence of Socrates from politics, however, must not be assumed to mean abstinence also from the discussion of the statesman's art or of the ideal form of government. As we have remarked, p 305, the Socrates of the Socratic dialogues, unless we include the *Euthydemus* and the *Gorgias*, does not directly discuss political theory, the situation in both the *Apology* and *Crito* would render the raising of such theoretical questions inappropriate. But Xenophon (for what his testimony is worth) freely represents him as doing so (*Mem* e.g. I, ii *passim*, III, ix, 10). And the interest of both Xenophon and Plato, and perhaps also Antisthenes (cf p 210), in planning ideal states ruled over by dedicated experts in the art of government suggests, as does the similar appearance in several disciples of an interest in feminism, a common source in Socrates.

Highly important for determining Socrates' political outlook are his recurrent strictures in both *Apology* and *Crito*, on the "many" or on "multitudes." As we have shown, p 304, the "many" in the political sense are spoken of as lawless and irresponsible, and dangerous to good men (*Apol* 28 A-B), they are, moreover, incompetent in that most important function of the moral expert, the ability to make men more wise (*Crito* 44 D). It is not the opinions of the majority of men, the laymen in virtue, which can guide us in settling questions of right and wrong (44 C, 47 A f., 49 D). Nor are ethical questions for the Socrates of the *Apology*

sharply distinct from those of politics, as they are for some of his modern interpreters; this we shall discuss further below. It is for this reason that we cannot accept Rogers' argument (*op cit*, p 71) that Socrates could not have spoken as he does (*Apology* 31 C-E) of his abstinence from politics, if he "had been indulging in propaganda" against democracy; what Socrates had to say on moral questions, as in this question of the "many," could not have been without bearing on political questions. The *Gorgias* also, if we are allowed to cite it as evidence, ascribes to Socrates a vigorous condemnation of the moral standard of all the "citizens and Strangers" of Athens, and a decisive rejection of the settling of questions in ethics by the majority vote of any group (471 E-472 C). There is an obvious consistency between all these positions and that approval of a political art parallel to the art of medicine which the Socrates of the *Gorgias* goes on to express, and which the *Republic* carries to its logical conclusion. That Plato himself believed the man Socrates to have been essentially engaged in investigating the foundations of such an art of politics is testified by Plato again in the *Politicus* (299 B f.), where he compares the Athenian condemnation of Socrates to the actions of persons who should forbid on pain of death all attempts to advance the arts of medicine or navigation.

Correlative with Socrates' disparagement of the "many" is the indication visible in the *Apology* that Socrates did not share the admiration for "equality" which underlay the use of the lot, and which formed the rallying cry of the extreme Athenian democrats. Socrates' emphatic declaration, already quoted, — "I do know that it is evil and disgraceful to act unjustly and to disobey him who is better than I, be he god or man" (29 B) — implies the same belief in the rightful authority of the better man, with the proviso that he shall be truly better, which we find expressed in many a later dialogue. And as we have seen, p 416, Socrates does not defend the equation of justice with simple equality, as Popper supposes he does in the *Gorgias*.

Some importance may properly be attached, also, to Socrates' opinion of Spartan institutions, though not as much as

Popper would maintain. We should not forget that despite its objectionable features, Sparta could be viewed as a modified democracy, and that such a "moderate democrat" as Isocrates considered it admirable in this respect. However this may be, Socrates in the *Crito* (52 E, 53 B), explaining that he has been well pleased with the laws of Athens, says that he has preferred them even to those of Crete and Sparta, though he has always praised these states as being "well-governed" (*eunomeisthai*); he adds that since Thebes and Megara, too, are "well-governed," they will not welcome a law-breaker such as Crito urges him, Socrates, to become. This does not sound like opposition on principle to any form of government not democratic. It implies approval both of the respect for law which, he says, characterizes all the states mentioned, and of the laws themselves of Crete and Sparta.

We note further that though Socrates had associates who were democrats, none of his philosophical continuators came forward as a sturdy advocate of the Athenian form of government of that day. Not Plato alone, but Xenophon also, who in later life was glad once more to be acceptable to his countrymen, played critic to Athenian democracy, and in differing degrees and with differing effect, both men showed approval of aspects of Sparta. And as we have seen, pp. 210f., it is as probable as anything we know of Antisthenes that he too called in question democratic principles and perhaps was also an admirer of Sparta.

To depict Socrates as a convinced supporter of the extreme Athenian democracy in the face of all these facts would seem impossible, yet, as we have seen, Popper energetically affirms it (pp. 188, 596, 600, 602), and in so doing he has on his side the weight of Rogers' opinion (*op. cit.*, pp. 72-73). The chief justification for this claim is the presence in Socrates' thought of a third principle, expressed in the *Crito* with great solemnity, that of his obligation to obey the laws of Athens. He affirms that as a son of Athens he is bound by piety to do so; secondly, he is obligated because he has chosen freely to remain a citizen of Athens and has approved its laws above all others, though it was open to him to have lived as an alien elsewhere; he has not even gone abroad or sought to

know the laws of other states (50 C ff., esp. 51 E-52 A). The laws of Athens have given him also the opportunity either of "persuading" them of "what is really just" or of obeying; one or other of these it was his duty to do (51 B-C, E). This last statement has been interpreted by Rogers (p. 72) and also by Popper (p. 596) as Socrates' testimony that Athens provided each of her citizens with the constitutional right to work politically for the repeal or revision of laws which seemed to him as an individual to be unjust. On these grounds Rogers and Popper conclude that if the *Crito* is truly Socratic in the sentiments it expresses, we have here Socrates' own heartfelt statement that he approves the Athenian constitution (which was certainly democratic), and that he will die rather than injure it.

The case for Socrates' approval of Athenian democracy is further bolstered with several slighter arguments, ranging from Rogers' mention of Aristophanes' failure in the *Clouds* to attribute any anti-democratic sympathies to Socrates, to what Popper sees as Socrates' own claim in the *Apology*, to sympathy with democratic persons and "democratic legality," and Socrates' eulogy in the *Crito*, again on Popper's view (p. 596), of virtue, justice, and "institutions and laws (those of Athens) as the best things among men."

Yet this conflict between Socratic approval and disapproval of Athenian democracy is not beyond solution. I can only indicate what seems to me a fully adequate solution. The context in the *Crito* makes it entirely clear that the "laws and institutions" which Socrates includes among the most precious human possessions are those of well-governed cities in general, including Thebes and Megara; Socrates, therefore, whether he approves or disapproves democracy, believes laws precious, even when they are imperfect. Secondly, his approval of Athenian laws does not preclude his approval also of those of Crete and Sparta; again we have no exclusive affirmation of the Athenian form of democracy as such. When we examine the particular Athenian laws which he has occasion to acknowledge as excellent, we find that they are the laws of marriage and those which directed his parents in nurturing him and educating him in gymnastic and music (50 D-E); he says that he

has seen and approved also how the laws "dispense justice and in other respects administer the city" (51 D-E); he praises the permission which Athens accords her citizens to depart at will, taking with them their possessions, and that other right to a bearing or trial which, as we shall explain below, we hold to be what is meant by the opportunity to "persuade" the laws (51 D-52 A). None of these laws is necessarily part of the democratic constitution in the stricter sense. Finally, Socrates' filial relation to the laws, a relation which he also likens to that of a slave to his master, and the general principle that it is never right to do wrong even in requital of wrong, bind him to his own city (49 C-52 E); these arguments, too, are not at all specific to democracy. In short, Socrates in honoring above all others the laws of Athens honors that sum total of laws and customs which inform with character the whole Athenian way of life and not the democratic constitution as such. It is quite within the evidence to believe that he considers the laws in some respects seriously imperfect and in need of reform, even that he believes them in some ways less perfect than those of Sparta, though he concedes to his native city as to a parent the right to be honored and protected by her sons even when they believe her mistaken in her way of life, and feels a particular regard for the welfare of his kinsmen, his fellow citizens (cf. *Apology* 30 A).

Once the possibility of this reading of the *Crito* is established, we can deal with the more specific arguments which have been brought to support the hypothesis of Socrates' special sympathy for democracy. It is most improbable that *Crito* 51 B-E, where Socrates speaks of having been given the opportunity to "persuade" the laws, is a reference to the possibility of reforming Athenian laws by constitutional methods. Far more likely is the interpretation of this metaphor as a reference to the citizen's right, whenever a charge is brought against him or a duty is laid upon him by the city, to have his day in court, and to persuade the jury, if he can, to acquit him. That this is what Socrates has in mind is made more probable by the use of the same word, "persuade" or "convince" (*peithein*) at *Apology* 37 A-B, where Socrates attributes his failure to "persuade" his judges of his innocence to the

shortness of the time given him for his defense; in some other cities, he says (Sparta is one of these), several days are allotted to the decision of a capital case. Now it is true that here he finds fault with a provision of the Athenian law, whereas at the end of the *Crito* (54 C-D) he declares that he is the victim of men, not of the laws of Athens, thus separating the laws from his accusers or from the jury-men who condemned him. But an extended metaphor such as the personification of the laws of Athens cannot be expected to achieve detailed correspondence with all the facts; if the laws are to be likened collectively to a parent or a master, scant provision can be made in such a figure of speech for nice distinctions between the laws as a whole and particular laws which are regarded as faulty, or between the law and the accusers and judges. The improbability that Socrates is speaking of the possibility that he might have worked for the repeal of an unjust law is greatly increased by his own statement that he was compelled to abstain from participation in the political process at Athens by the danger of death, should he oppose the *demos* on principle, and moreover by the obstacle which, as we know from other sources (cf. our p. 318), the *graphê paranomôn* seems to have set in the path of legal change.

Among slighter arguments we may answer first the one based by Rogers, p. 73, upon Aristophanes' silence as to anti-democratic bias in Socrates. Aristophanes is scarcely, either in our opinion or in Rogers', a generally reliable witness to the real intentions of Socrates; Rogers will agree that Aristophanes omits much which is most essential. The playwright himself was no admirer of the extreme democracy, and would therefore have seen no occasion to pillory Socrates for holding similar views. Finally, such opinions were neither picturesque nor comic. The comedian has, therefore, plentiful reasons for his silence. Popper's companion remark (p. 600) that Aristophanes, by linking Socrates with the sophists, "most" of whom "were democrats," implies that Socrates too was a democrat, is not only unsound as regards the sophists, but also seems, as with Rogers' argument, to involve too great reliance on Aristophanes: the playwright links Socrates with those

sophists who taught natural science and dishonest skill in rhetoric; are we to believe these similarities too? Popper has also employed (p. 596) Xenophon's testimony in the *Anabasis* (III, i, 5) that Socrates had advised him against joining Cyrus, on the ground that Athens might well look askance at a citizen who joined a former ally of Sparta against Athens. This argument does not touch what we are maintaining, namely: that Socrates was loyal to Athens, and urged others to be so, without approving the extreme democracy of her constitution. Popper's identification of Athens with the democratic constitution, even with its extremest provisions, has blinded him to this possibility.

Of Popper's remaining arguments, two are based upon the *Apology*. Reference is made (20 E-21 A) to Chaerophon, an ardent Socratic to whom the Delphic oracle had given the momentous reply that no one was wiser than Socrates; in reminding the jury of Chaerophon's democratic sympathies, argues Popper (p. 602), Socrates "emphasizes" his own "intimacy with an ardent democrat," something we must not suspect him of doing "without being truly sympathetic with the democratic cause." Similarly, Popper asserts (*ibid.*) that in describing to the jury his refusal to yield either to the democratic Assembly or to the Thirty Tyrants when ordered to act unjustly, Socrates "emphasizes his faith in democratic legality." Popper in making the first of these points overlooks the possibility that Socrates is interested in showing what was in fact the truth, that he has had friends among both democrats and oligarchs. Later in the *Apology* (33 D f.) he has occasion to call to witness several of his young associates who are present in court along with their fathers or elder relatives, to whom, as Socrates argues, he does not seem to be a corrupter of youth. Among these he does not scruple to name Plato and his brother Adeimantus, who, as close kinsmen of Critias and Charmides, well-remembered for oligarchic villainy, were in themselves sufficient to offset mention of several ardent democrats. Popper's second point is similarly one-sided in what it calls upon us to notice. Socrates is pointing out his faith in legality, not in democratic legality. By what right does Popper allocate to the Athenian democrats alone this admired quality?

The final argument which Popper adduces to prove the partisan democratic sympathies of Socrates is indeed a dangerous one: he proposes (p. 596) to regard as an interpolation, either by a later hand or by Plato's own treachery, the clause in the *Crito* (52 E) where Socrates says he has always praised the laws of Crete and Sparta. This clause is in conflict, Popper urges, with Socrates' other statement (*Crito* 52 B-C) that he has not desired to go abroad or to "know" the laws of other states, and even more in conflict with his general acceptance of Athenian laws. Popper here overlooks the meaning which is given to the word "know" by the context of travel abroad, that of "knowing-as-a-result-of-personal-acquaintance." But even were Popper's particular objection well grounded, his suggested remedy is extreme. The questioning of clauses in the Platonic text is not practised by careful interpreters in general in the absence of technical indications, such as manuscript variants or grammatical difficulties. And to propose alternatively that even in the *Crito* we be suspicious of Plato's misrepresenting hand is to risk invalidating the dialogue as a basis for any judgment whatsoever upon Socrates as distinct from Plato, and in particular to weaken what is after all the only respectable evidence that exists anywhere for Socrates' approval of the Athenian (democratic) constitution, namely: his statement in the *Crito* that he has found the laws of Athens acceptable to him his whole life long. Thus Popper, in his effort to avoid accepting an unwelcome passage, is logically driven to the far more unwelcome alternative of breaching one of his major strongholds.

We have stressed Socrates' distrust in the verdict of the equal "many" whether in the political or in the philosophic sense, and have pointed out his holding up in both the *Apology* and the *Crito* of the ideal of the moral expert, and in the *Gorgias*, the ideal of the statesman physician; we have even maintained that in some respects he was an earnest admirer of Sparta. Yet we have not, it will be observed, denied that he considered Athenian laws excellent among actual laws, and in many respects above reproach. This unstable equilibrium in the Socratic attitude as depicted in these early dialogues

is paralleled in the movement of Plato's thought throughout his life, as we see him now attempting to work out the consequences of the ideal, as in the *Republic* and the *Politicus*, now starting from the actual Athenian laws and attempting to reform them to meet the Socratic criticisms of them, as in the *Laws*. Our discussion tends, therefore, to the conclusion that in the early dialogues either we have a Socrates who thus sets the problem and provides the starting point for Plato's political thought, or we must conclude, so great is the consistency, that we have no Socrates at all, but only Plato's own early adumbration of all the main lines of his later development.

We may further illustrate the relationship between Socrates and Plato in relation to politics by citing several points at which the *Apology* and *Crito* anticipate thoughts expressed, to the scandal of Plato's critics, in the *Laws*. Rogers, as we have said, sees Socrates as prodemocratic, Plato as antidemocratic; he further contrasts (p. 111) the Socratic conviction that "the goodness which true wisdom presupposes is a condition of the human soul" with Plato's belief that it is "this as well, but even more fundamentally it is social, a goodness for citizenship." In proof of Plato's attitude he cites *Laws* 643 E and 659 D, from both of which we shall quote immediately below. Popper, as we have explained, pp. 299ff. and pp. 396ff., holds a view of Socrates similar to Rogers', and in Plato's case maintains simply that he identifies virtue with subservience to the state's interest. We have already, on pp. 520ff. above, in meeting Popper's arguments, shown that for Plato goodness is not, as Rogers avers, "more fundamentally . . . goodness for citizenship." Starting, now, by accepting the other half of Rogers' statement, that for Plato goodness is good citizenship "as well" (to the extent that the laws of the state are such as to foster virtue), we shall seek to show that the same view is held by the Socrates who speaks to us in the *Apology* and *Crito*.

To match the sentence cited by Rogers from Plato's *Laws*, 643 E, where true education is said to be "training from childhood in goodness, which makes a man eagerly desirous of becoming a perfect

citizen" (trans. Bury, Loeb Library), we remind ourselves first of those other passages in the *Laws* which set as the aim of the entire city the attainment by its citizens of the highest human excellence, and then call attention to a passage in the *Apology* near the beginning (20 A-B), in which Socrates describes how, on meeting a friend who had sons, he had commented to him that if the boys were colts or calves, it would be no hard task to discover a trainer competent to produce in them the excellence befitting such animals; but "since they are human beings," who, he had asked, shall impart to them "the kind of excellence which is that of a man and a citizen?" We have here the same identification of human goodness and "goodness for citizenship" which is supposed to be specifically non-Socratic.

The same parallel with Plato's opinion in the *Laws* can be detected in the principles governing the actions of Socrates as described in the two early dialogues. Socrates here draws for us the line between the citizen's duty of rebellion against the constituted authority of the state, and the duty of submission. In the one, we see him setting above the state his service to the god, or, as it might be put, his duty to foster virtue, to tend both his own soul and those of his fellow citizens; in the other dialogue, we learn that no other cause can justify the citizen in weakening by his disobedience the law of his city. In Plato's *Laws*, in the passage cited on p. 521, the same duty to hold the cause of virtue preëminent over allegiance to the city is laid upon the citizens by Plato. Even in *Laws* 659 D, the second of the passages cited by Rogers to show Plato's identification of virtue with citizenship, quoted in our n., p. 520, Plato makes the confirmation of those who are "oldest and most just" necessary to give full validity to the law which is to serve as moral standard for his citizens. If now it be argued that Plato held himself competent to enunciate such law, so too did Socrates believe himself competent to declare a universal and cosmically valid standard of moral good. The self-exaltation here implied is only that which necessarily attaches to anyone who believes himself clearly to perceive the universal good, and which attaches in equal measure to those who, like Popper, preach the necessity that all men should

make responsible choice of the goals which he points out to them.

It has been held to Plato's discredit that he conceives the state as an educational institution designed to produce moral excellence in its citizens; he conceives that even the best of men, so Popper has argued, "depend upon society, upon the state," and "can reach perfection only through the state and in the state"; Socrates, in contrast, proclaims the "nurtury" or "self-sufficiency of the good man" (Popper, pp. 76, 515, 639). It is difficult to meet this charge as stated, since it appears obvious that all of us do in fact "depend upon society" both materially and morally to a very large extent, and one would not wish to deny that Plato was aware of this fact. Nor need we deny that Plato held good laws (or ideal rulers) to be the sole means whereby most men can attain virtue, and desirable for the protection of even the best natures, since many of these must be corrupted in an unwholesome environment. We even find Plato in one passage (*Rep.* 497 A) speaking of the "greater stature" that the few true devotees of philosophy (including Socrates himself) might attain in an ideal state; we may associate this with Plato's suggestion (*Rep.* 424 A) of the continuous upward evolution in human quality that might result from the interaction of better men and better nurture. But if in his charge against Plato Popper means to mean that, for Plato, no man could attain true moral excellence outside of the perfect state, we have shown the contrary on pp. 416, 465, 520f., and we may add *Theaet.* 176 B and *Symp.* 211 B-212 A; there are also the inescapable implications of his exaltation of Socrates. Plato's ability to combine in one scheme of values these two poles, the dependence on society and the transpolitical "appeal to Heaven" is, as we view it, a reproduction of the same duality in the allegiance of the historical Socrates. No one questions the presence in Socrates of the transpolitical appeal; whoever doubts the dependence upon society should observe the dependence of the Socrates of the *Crito*. In accordance more the Socrates of the *Crito*, knowing his debt to the laws of Athens, he does not commend them for their hands-off policy, their scrupulous refraining from interference in the moral training given him by his parents and teachers, and in his own subsequent moral development. He represents them as solemnly reminding

him that he is their child and their nursing, that they have educated him and given him what share they could of all that was fair and good (51 C-D). Here is no honoring of a state which does not educate its citizens for virtue.

Plato has been condemned as setting the state higher than the individual, in contrast to the "individualist" Socrates. We have seen that Plato does not do so; he sets the moral welfare of each and every citizen above the material concern of the individual or of the group, and the material welfare of the group above the material (but not the spiritual) welfare of the individual. But in this place we may call attention to the strong terms in which in the *Crito* Socrates states the claim of the state to the citizen's submission. Plato in the *Laws*, preparing to enact a law limiting severely the right of bequest, can be found declaring to the aged testator, "You yourself and this your property are not your own, but belong to the whole of your race, both past and future, and . . . still more truly does all your race and its property belong to the State" (923 A, trans. Bury, Loeb Library). But Socrates in the *Crito* makes the laws say, "You are our offspring and our slave, you yourself and your ancestors," and "your country is more to be revered . . . than your mother and your father and all your ancestors" (50 E-51 B, trans. Fowler, Loeb Library).

We may note in passing that in these sentences is also contained, as elsewhere in the *Crito* (52 C-D), an affirmation of the master's claim to rule over his slave, who is also obligated to submit even to abuse. This shows that same acceptance of the institution of slavery which is held reprehensible in Plato. And in both *Crito* (51 B) and *Apology* (28 D-E) Socrates acknowledges the state's unquestionable right to demand of its citizens their services in war, an obligation which is called "militarism" when enjoined by Plato in the *Laws*.

A contrast has been drawn, again, by Cornford (op. cit., pp. 43-49, 82-83) and with more emphasis, by Popper (e.g., p. 601), between Socrates' readiness to talk to the young, his criticism in their presence of the supposed wisdom of the self-satisfied citizens of Athens, and the principle affirmed by Plato in the *Laws* (and similarly in the *Republic*) that the moral

teachings of the city shall not be questioned in the presence of the young, nor, for that matter, examined by most of the citizens even in their later years. Dodda also (*The Greeks and the Irrational*, 1951, p. 212) has recently called attention to what he thinks Plato's breach at this point with his old master. Now, it would be idle to deny that Socrates and Plato differ here, yet, if the position we have been defending is tenable, their different attitudes derive from a common principle subsisting at a deeper level of conviction.

That this is so may perhaps still require careful demonstration, in view of the several pronouncements of Socrates which are customarily otherwise interpreted. There is the famous sentence, "The unexamined life is unworthy of a man" (*Apology* 38 A), and there is Socrates' comparison of himself to the gadfly who goes about arousing the citizens from their dogmatic certainty (30 E-31 A). Here it seems that the questioning of moral values is treated as itself a value. But as we have pointed out pp. 305-306, the actual situation of Socrates differed from the imagined situation of Plato. Socrates had serious objections to make against the value schedule which, he felt, the Athenians of his day honored by their actions and taught by example to their sons. It was against the uncritical acceptance of this morality of convenience that his mission was directed; this was the slumber from which the gadfly was to awaken his fellow citizens, this the conceit of wisdom against which his examination and refutation were directed. Socrates has been misunderstood by those who fail to observe the immediate sequel of every such refutation, the exhortation to adopt forthwith the Socratic scorn of that fear which thinks it knows that death is an evil, and to embrace the Socratic certainty that justice alone is truly good. This may be observed at *Apology* 29 E-30 A, 31 A-B, and 41 D-E, and is not controverted by 38 A. We find here no skepticism directed to proving that death may, after all, be the greatest evil, no refutation of persons who suppose themselves wise in knowing the supreme importance of virtue. Socrates feels himself secure in urging the questioning of customary moral beliefs, first because he believes their inadequacy will thus be exposed, second because he believes the truth must be wholeheartedly accepted by anyone who is to benefit by it, and third (a position

in accord with that of Cornford) because he believes there is an objective moral truth which will infallibly be uncovered by the persistent application of reason to human affairs.

Since this is so, we need not hesitate to see in Plato's *Laws* a city in which (so Plato intends) the Socratic schedule of values is to be embodied in law and universally accepted, and in which, therefore, no gadfly and no examination and refutation of complacently worldly citizens will be needed. All will live, if not the personally examined life, the life which has been examined and found good, and "to talk every day about virtue," which, in the *Apology* Socrates declares to be, along with the examining, the "greatest good for man," will be transformed into that constant "charming" of themselves with the praises of goodness which is to be among the chief duties of the citizens (*Laws* 663 B ff, esp. 665 C). Socrates, living, so to speak, in the City of Destruction, had need to preach constantly the pilgrimage to the Celestial City. But Plato, imagining that blessed city to be attained, must change his text.

Popper's charge that Plato has betrayed Socrates has been met, if by "betray" is meant consciously to attribute to him doctrines known to be abhorrent to him. But if it is reduced to mean only the attribution to him of developments and extensions of his thought held by Popper, though not by Plato, to be discreditable—against this there is no defense, for who is to say that the most reverent disciple may not be guilty, in the judgment of some observer, of this fault? And thus in building on a Socratic base the theory of ideas, in depicting Socrates as requiring the study of higher mathematics as a prerequisite to philosophy, and in approving the construction, in the *Timaeus*, of a teleological cosmology, Plato doubtless, in the opinion of some critics, has brought discredit upon Socrates. So, too, in constructing the plans of ideal cities, and proposing there to give to the moral imperatives of Socrates the force of coercive civil law, Plato may have gone beyond Socrates in a direction we ourselves deplore. But if Plato believed, as he manifestly did, that Socrates had hold of the true good, the one and only good, how could he think it possible or right to deny it to mankind? There is error here, but sublime error, in

the transformation of Soerates, coming to each of the Athenians, as he says (*Apology* 31 B, trans. Fowler, Loeb Library), "like a father or an elder brother and urging you to care for virtue," into those laws which, as

Plato says (*Laws* 859 A, trans. Bury, Loeb Library), are to "give counsel about what is noble, good and just," and to "resemble persons moved by love and wisdom, such as a father and mother."

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